

IT'S GOING TO BE
A LONG FOUR YEARS
JEFFREY H. ANDERSON • FRED BARNES
THOMAS JOSELYN • WILLIAM KRISTOL

the weekly

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A SMALL MAN IN A BIG JOB

The petty reign
of Harry Reid

BY
MICHAEL
WARREN



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She Bowled Them Over

THE SCRAPBOOK, like millions of Americans, watched last week's anticlimactic BCS championship. Undefeated Notre Dame was pitted against Alabama, but it wasn't much of a football game. After Alabama got out to a 28-to-nothing lead, we wondered if Notre Dame was going to change its nickname at halftime to the Fighting French.

And so the commentators, Kirk Herbstreit and Brent Musburger, were left with little of note to say about the game. Naturally, they spent a few moments dwelling on a welcome distraction—Alabama quarterback A.J. McCarron's girlfriend, Katherine Webb. THE SCRAPBOOK was admittedly scandalized when it first learned about Webb, as it could not believe an Alabama quarterback would have the temerity to date an Auburn grad.

As a secondary matter, it must be explained that Webb is also the 2012 winner of the Miss Alabama pageant, and represented the state in last year's Miss USA contest. Hence, Musburger's play-by-play: "You quarterbacks, you get all the good looking women. What a beautiful woman." Herbstreit chimed in: "A.J.'s doing some things

right down in Tuscaloosa." Musburger added, "If you're a youngster in Alabama, start getting the football out and throw it around the backyard with Pop."

The number of Americans offended by this exchange probably wouldn't fill the faculty lounges of the Seven Sisters colleges. Nonetheless, ESPN's vice president of communications, Mike Soltys, issued a statement the next day. "We always try to capture interesting storylines. . . . However, we apologize that the commentary in this instance went too far. Brent understands that," he said. Now that Soltys has clarified ESPN's hair-trigger alertness to sexism, we assume the network will henceforth swear off low-angled shots of cheerleaders being hoisted aloft and diligently censor the beer commercials it airs.

One person who was not offended was Miss Webb. "I think the media has been really unfair to" Musburger, she said on the *Today* show. "The fact that he said [McCarron's mother and I] were beautiful and gorgeous—I don't think any woman wouldn't be flattered by that." Webb's father even weighed in: "He was trying to be

complimentary, and I think they need to give Brent a break."

Of course, if you go searching, you can find those who took offense. One writer at the website *Feministing* was able to rise from her fainting couch long enough to commit pop anthropology:

So, now seems like a good time to point out that this bulls—t is part of the rape culture that directly enables assaults. . . . As Travis Waldron writes, "It's a culture that views women as nothing more than chattel, a commodity to be won by the best player even if she isn't a willing participant. It fosters a sense of entitlement to women and their bodies that only ingrains the rape and violence culture deeper into the game."

Silly us. We thought the quarterback getting the beauty queen was a wholesome American cliché. Instead, it turns out we're all accessories to rape. As for ESPN's suits, we realize they are not deep thinkers, but they may want to ponder the fate of their profits in a feminist fantasy world, where women no longer beautify themselves and men no longer engage in feats of athleticism to impress them. ♦

Deck the Halls

THE SCRAPBOOK notes with concern that the baseball world seems to have had its nerves shattered last week. The Baseball Writers' Association of America, whose members vote on admission to the Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, chose not to admit any living players at its annual induction ceremony. Nothing like this has happened since 1960, and it means that seven-time Cy Young Award-winner Roger Clemens, home-run king Barry Bonds, Sammy Sosa, Mark McGwire, and Rafael Palmeiro will not be inducted this year. And may not be inducted for a very long time, if ever.

Of course, everybody knows the reason: Clemens, Bonds, et al. have

been accused of steroid use during their stellar careers, a taint the writers felt was sufficient to exclude players who, under other circumstances, would have been swiftly admitted to the Hall of Fame. The *New York Times* chose to dramatize their exclusion by printing a mostly blank Sports section front page, headlined "And the Inductees Are . . ."

THE SCRAPBOOK readily acknowledges that this whole subject is, to quote President Obama, above our pay grade. The Hall of Fame, lest we forget, is a private enterprise. We are content to allow the baseball world to sort out (or not sort out) this problem.

THE SCRAPBOOK does, however, have one small suggestion. The

whole notion of a Hall of Fame is slightly problematical—like the Nobel and Pulitzer Prizes, it fails to recognize achievement as often as it succeeds—and, in a curious way, can diminish as much as exalt. The Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in Cleveland, for example, seems to have inducted just about everybody who ever recorded a Top 40 hit.

To be sure, we don't take the Rock and Roll (or even the Baseball) Hall of Fame too seriously; but perhaps the results would be more satisfying if the verdict on fame were not being pronounced by one's contemporaries. Clemens, Bonds, and Sosa, for instance, were active players as recently as 2007. Shouldn't there be a slightly longer interval between

playing and immortality—say, a quarter-century or more?

On that note, we were gratified to see that one of the people who will be inducted into the Hall of Fame this summer is Jacob Ruppert, one-time owner of the New Yankees, who brought Babe Ruth to New York and built Yankee Stadium. Colonel Ruppert died in 1939, 74 years ago. Sounds like about the right waiting period. ♦

Required Reading

You may remember contributing editor Max Boot's article a couple of issues back on the fascinating career of Orde Wingate, the British officer who commanded forces fighting on the side of liberty in Israel, Ethiopia, and Burma. The book from which it was drawn, *Invisible Armies: An Epic History of Guerrilla Warfare from Ancient Times to the Present*, has now been published. THE SCRAPBOOK congratulates Boot—and highly recommends the new volume to our readers.

From the origins of insurgency in Mesopotamia, up through the American counterinsurgency that bloodied al Qaeda in those same lands, Boot documents the campaigns of low-intensity conflict and describes the men who led them—on both sides. While there are plenty of heroes, from Alexander the Great to Garibaldi, and from Bar Kokhba to Yonatan Netanyahu, not all of the characters from this virtually encyclopedic account of the history of insurgencies, guerrilla warfare, and terrorism are, like Wingate, on the side of the angels.

As Boot explains in his prologue, his research included some harrowing travel to Colombia, the Philippines, the Palestinian territories, Lebanon, Iraq, and Afghanistan, where he visited frequently to confer with U.S. military commanders. He argues that low-intensity conflicts are the historical norm and will become more prevalent again in the future. And there's no better guide to both the past and the future than *Invisible Armies*, the tour de force of a scholar as well as a man who's seen American adversaries and soldiers at work up close. ♦



Daddy Clinton

It's understandable that years of war and economic struggle have made many long for the relatively halcyon days of the 1990s, but how far are we really prepared to go to rehab Bill Clinton's image? Wait, don't answer that question just yet:

The National Father's Day Council announced [last week] that it has selected President Bill Clinton, Founder of the William J. Clinton Foundation and 42nd President of the United States, as a 2013 "Father of the Year" Award recipient. The awards will be presented at the 72nd Annual Father of the Year Awards in New York City on Tuesday, June 11.

THE SCRAPBOOK is wondering if Bernard Lewinsky is available for comment. In any event, it's about time someone feted Bill Clinton for forcing millions of parents to have that awkward sex talk with their kids years before they planned to. Heaven knows Bubba is perpetually short of opportunities to bask in adoration. Still, we're not planning to be there for the "Father of the Year" festivities in the ballroom of Manhattan's Grand Hyatt this June, contemplating the example our former president set for his only daughter with his repeated humiliations of her mother.

We were going to close with a joke about falling standards, but then we noted who the 2007 recipient of

the National Father's Day Council award was: former senator and distinguished cad John Edwards. ♦

Larry Miller, Back on His Feet

THE SCRAPBOOK is thrilled to report that actor, comedian, and WEEKLY STANDARD friend and contributor Larry Miller is relaunching his popular podcast, *This Week with Larry Miller*, on ACE Broadcasting (www.adamcarrolla.com/LMBlog). Nine months ago, Larry accidentally lost his footing and banged his head against a wall. Yes, there's more to it than that.

Fans of Larry and his show will not be shocked to learn that the founder of the Larry Miller Drinking Society suffered this accident outside an Irish pub. While waiting for his second martini, he went out for a smoke. A couple was walking in, at which point Larry, ever the gentle-

man, intended to hold the door open for them. During the maneuvering he lost his footing and ultimately hit the back of his head against the wall of the bar. "Shouldn't I be falling down after I have the drink?" he wondered on his show. Fortunately, someone called an ambulance. (While waiting for it, Larry was able to go back inside for his martini, feeling just fine—at least until the bartender informed him he was bleeding.)

But he wasn't fine. "For a couple of weeks you look like you're in a *Frankenstein* movie," Larry relates in his podcast. Indeed, the doctors even placed him in an induced coma. But his brain healed perfectly, and after a month in physical rehab, he was back on his feet. Larry informs THE SCRAPBOOK that while "up and running" is a good phrase, "walking carefully" is better."

"We're back here now," Larry assures his listeners. "That's right, it's the new year. What year is it?" ♦

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I'm a Believer

Daniel Patrick Moynihan's view that "everyone is entitled to his own opinion but not his own facts" has been quoted more in this year of budgetary back-and-forth than at any time since Moynihan first said it (if indeed he did), never without a condescending smirk. But the smugness is unwarranted. Whatever its epistemological merits, Moynihan's bon mot is, as a political matter, false. In a democracy, you most certainly are entitled to your own facts, or, put a bit more precisely, to the rough-and-ready model of reality you form from experience. To say otherwise is to make deference to some factual arbiter a precondition for political participation—and that arbiter will, likely as not, be a bought lobby or a bureaucracy. If we insist too strongly on Moynihan's view of the matter, adulthood will become a lot more like childhood.

Plausible untruths were always flying around when I was a kid in Massachusetts. I lived across the street from an overweight bully we'll call Kevin Malarkey. Kevin's conversational repertoire consisted of various half-truths he'd heard somewhere and then embroidered a bit. Of the nearby town of Swampscott, he once told us, "You know why it's called Swampscott? Because there was an Indian who lived there named Scott Swamp!" When conversation turned to the relative merits of presidents, only two or three of whom we could name, Kevin chose Dwight Eisenhower. "He stopped a guy who was trying to take over the world," Kevin explained. "His name was *Hi-yah-Hitlah!*" Kevin had a theological bent, too. He liked to drag Jesus into the argument somehow, so he could feel bet-

ter about beating you up if you said, "That's not in the Bible," or otherwise expressed skepticism.

There was little need to bully me. Credulity was my middle name. One Saturday morning, my father came upon me as I fought back tears. I was sitting on a circle of shag rug that my parents had put on the pebble-patterned Formica floor of the family room, which got freezing cold in winter. It used to be assumed that there



would come a moment on Saturday when kids actually got up from in front of the television and *did something else*. By 11 o'clock or so, cartoons on the main VHF channels gave way to programming for sad and idle adolescents and old people: English shows, candlepin bowling, how-to demonstrations. Only 4 of the 13 spots on the clocklike VHF dial were occupied by real programming; the others just hissed and showed "snow" as you turned the dial past them with a loud *thlonk, thlonk*—slowly and cautiously, lest you break the TV set. But sometimes there were interesting things on the 70-channel UHF dial, which was almost deserted, with channels only every dozen numbers or so. It was there that I stumbled onto professional wrestling.

I was hooked. Cripes, what a bunch of scoundrels. There was Chief Jay Strongbow, with his dread "tomahawk chop." There was the Japanese "Professor" Toru Tanaka (I imagine the imputation of intellectualism was supposed to render him loathsome to those viewers too young to remember World War II), along with his henchman Fuji. And there was bald, psychopathic George "The Animal" Steele (who would "chew the turnbuckle" on the ringside ropes, although no one ever felt the need to explain what a turnbuckle was, and I have never found out).

Only one of these wrestlers could I consider rooting for. This was the Puerto Rican Pedro Morales, relatively decent, taciturn, gentlemanly, and therefore—according to every cartoon and children's movie I'd seen up to that point—destined to win. I watched as he stepped into the ring with Toru Tanaka. But no sooner had the bout begun than something went terribly wrong. Fuji, standing behind the ropes, reached into a large bag marked "SALT" and started throwing something into Pedro's eyes. Pedro was blinded! Worse, the referee

didn't even see it! Then the Professor got out the dread "foreign object." The ref didn't see that, either! You could never tell what exactly this foreign object was—on a grainy black-and-white screen it looked something like a children's thermometer . . . Oh, no, no! Pedro was staggering around holding his eyes and howling and now the ruthless Tanaka . . . At that point, my father appeared in the doorway with a snow shovel. "Ah, professional wrestling," he said. "You know it's fake, right? They're actors."

I took a whole roomful of cold air into my lungs. "Yeah," I said, with a bit more yelp in my voice than I had intended. "Yeah, I know it's fake!"

CHRISTOPHER CALDWELL

Taxation Without Cessation

While the press was distracted by the misnamed “fiscal cliff,” we began the New Year with a 13-figure deficit and a 14-figure national debt—the result of today’s Americans borrowing vast sums of money and putting it on future Americans’ tab. The two parties offer rather different explanations for the cause of this unsustainable transfer of wealth from the young (and the unborn) to the old, which the “fiscal cliff” deal—at least on paper—only made worse.

President Obama and the Democrats suggest that federal tax revenues have fallen, while federal spending has generally proceeded at reasonable levels. Republicans suggest that tax revenues have more or less flatlined, while spending has skyrocketed. Neither explanation is fully accurate. In truth, taxes have risen—substantially. Yet these substantial increases in federal taxation have been dwarfed by an explosion in federal spending.

According to White House, Congressional Budget Office (CBO), and U.S. Census tallies, when John F. Kennedy was in the White House in 1962, federal tax revenues were \$534 per capita, or \$4,178 in today’s dollars. Last year (according to those same sources), federal tax revenues were \$7,793 per capita. So, from 1962 to 2012, taxes rose 87 percent even after accounting for inflation and population growth. In other words, across the past 50 years, real (inflation-adjusted) per-capita taxes have nearly doubled.

Of course, this 87 percent increase in per-capita taxation hasn’t remotely kept the federal government from racking up higher deficit spending. With JFK in the White House in 1962, the federal government spent 7 percent more than it had available to spend—\$1.07 going

out for every \$1 coming in. With Obama in the White House, it has spent \$1.56 for every \$1 available.

All other things being equal, if the federal government had taken its 1962 spending levels, increased them by 68 percent to reflect the population growth from 1962 to 2012, then increased them by another 682 percent to reflect inflation over that 50-year span, and *then* given itself a 70 percent increase in its spending allowance on top of that, it would have spent \$2.392 trillion last year—and we would have run a surplus of \$57 billion. But rather than settling for a 70 percent raise on top of inflation and population growth, the federal government gave itself a 151 percent raise on top of inflation and population growth. As a result, rather than running a surplus of \$57 billion in 2012, we ran a deficit of \$1.089 trillion.

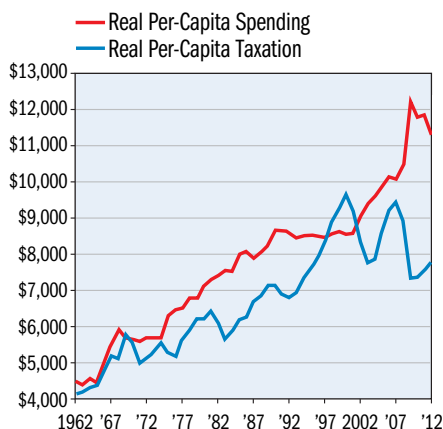
The top chart at left helps illustrate what has happened. Despite the recent decline in tax revenues (a result of Americans’ decline in income) during the Bush-Obama economic slump, the federal government now has 87 percent more money available to spend—per person, after adjusting for inflation—than it had during the Kennedy years. Yet while real per-capita taxation has nearly doubled over the past 50 years, real per-capita spending has come closer to tripling:

In short, we’re on the fast track toward insolvency as a nation for one simple reason: Our federal gov-

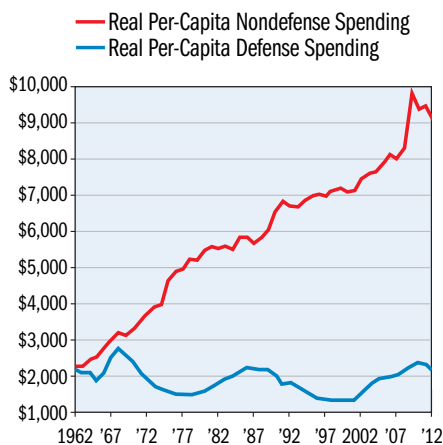
ernment has been spending far, far more than even our hefty tax increases have been able to cover. Yet House speaker John Boehner reports that Obama told him during their predictably fruitless “fiscal cliff” negotiations, “We don’t have a spending problem.”

Liberals generally try to mask our rising levels of federal taxation—and our far greater increases in federal

Spending has outpaced revenue wildly...



...even as spending on defense stayed flat



spending—by reporting them in relation to the gross domestic product (GDP), rather than in relation to inflation and population growth. That way, if Americans' taxes are doubled, but the economy doubles in size over that same span, it doesn't count as a tax increase. The same goes for spending. The underlying assumption is that any increase in economic growth should be matched by a corresponding increase in the size and scope of government. But there's nothing that says our government has to grow every bit as fast as our economy—especially when we're already \$16,000,000,000,000 in debt and plainly can't afford to keep borrowing.

What are we spending such colossal sums of borrowed money on? Well, we're clearly not spending them on defense. According to official White House and CBO tallies, from 1962 to 2012, the share of total federal spending that went to national defense fell from nearly half (49 percent) to less than a fifth (19 percent). Where, then, is all of the borrowed money going? Here's a hint: Medicare and Medicaid—and now Obamacare—didn't exist in 1962.

In fact, from 1962 to 2012, real per-capita defense spending actually *dropped*—by 1.5 percent (from \$2,194 in 1962 to \$2,161 in 2012). If all federal spending had followed the same trajectory as defense spending, then total federal spending in 2012 would have been \$1.385 trillion, and we would have run a surplus of more than a trillion dollars—\$1.064 trillion, to be exact. Unfortunately, while real per-capita defense spending fell by 1.5 percent, real per-capita federal spending *aside* from defense *rose* by a whopping 298 percent (from \$2,284 in 1962 to \$9,098 in 2012). Thus, instead of a \$1 trillion surplus, we ran a \$1 trillion deficit.

The bottom chart on the preceding page shows how much the federal government has spent, in real per-capita dollars, on defense programs and on nondefense programs—from Kennedy to Obama. Over the past 50 years, defense spending has essentially flatlined, taxation has nearly doubled, total federal spending has far more than doubled, and nondefense spending has quadrupled. In that light, only the most stubborn ideologue could blame our mind-boggling deficits on insufficient taxation or excessive defense spending.

Just days after the 40th-anniversary celebration of the Declaration of Independence, Thomas Jefferson wrote that “private fortunes are destroyed by public as well as private extravagance.” He warned that “public debt” is the “fore horse” of the “frightful team” of public mismanagement that leads to the “misery,” “suffering,” “wretchedness,” and “oppression” of private citizens. As we begin 2013, we would do well to start heeding Jefferson's warning. The only way to escape our worsening fiscal calamity is by substantially reforming Medicare and Medicaid to make them affordable, replacing Obamacare (which will require having a 2016 Republican presidential candidate who can persuasively advance a replacement), enacting

pro-growth policies, and—most simply—cutting federal spending almost across the board. A half-century during which we've nearly doubled our taxes and quadrupled our nondefense spending is a sufficiently lengthy experiment in gross fiscal mismanagement. It's time for overdue leadership and meaningful reform.

—Jeffrey H. Anderson

Interrogate Brennan

President Obama's nominee for CIA director, John Brennan, has been one of the president's closest advisers over the last four years. So it should come as no surprise that Obama wants him to run Langley. And Brennan's boosters lay out a compelling case.

Brennan has served as Obama's chief counterterrorism adviser, overseeing the administration's approach to fighting al Qaeda. This includes the use of drone attacks, which became the administration's signature tactic. Osama bin Laden and a significant number of other senior al Qaeda leaders were killed on Brennan's shift. And Brennan is a 25-year veteran of Langley, meaning he knows the CIA well and can manage the vast intelligence bureaucracy.

That is how the president sees Brennan's nomination. But this narrative leaves out messy details—complexities that the Senate Intelligence Committee would be well served to explore.

Some have attacked Brennan, for instance, for making favorable comments about the CIA's detention and enhanced interrogation program. It is heresy on the American left to claim that any good came out of the program, and the issue is likely to come up during Brennan's confirmation hearing.

During an appearance on CBS News with Harry Smith on November 2, 2007, Brennan said the CIA's interrogation practices had protected Americans. “There [has] been a lot of information that has come out from these interrogation procedures that the agency has in fact used against the real hard-core terrorists,” Brennan said. “It has saved lives,” he continued. “And let's not forget, these are hardened terrorists who have been responsible for 9/11, who have shown no remorse at all for the deaths of 3,000 innocents.”

Brennan was asked about a form of waterboarding during the same interview, and denounced the prac-

tice. “I think it is certainly subjecting an individual to severe pain and suffering, which is the classic definition of torture,” Brennan said. “And I believe, quite frankly, it’s inconsistent with American values and it’s something that should be prohibited.” However, Brennan pointed out, only “about a third” of the 100 or so terrorists detained by the CIA since the attacks of 9/11 “have been subjected to what the CIA refers to as enhanced interrogation tactics, and only a small proportion of those have in fact been subjected to the most serious types of enhanced procedures.”

President Obama shuttered the CIA’s detention program—the same one John Brennan said “saved lives”—as one of his first acts in office. The United States has by and large gotten out of the detention business. The highest-profile terrorists captured in Obama’s first term have remained in the custody of American allies, who are often duplicitous.

For example, a Tunisian named Ali Harzi, who is suspected of playing a direct role in the September 11, 2012, terrorist attack on the U.S. consulate in Benghazi, Libya, was captured in Turkey at the behest of American officials in October. He was deported to his home country, where he remained imprisoned for months before the FBI finally got access to him. Harzi was interviewed by the Americans for just three hours in December. A Tunisian court recently ordered him released.

There was a time when a suspected terrorist such as Harzi would have been detained at Guantánamo or in one of the CIA’s so-called black sites. Now, America either kills terrorists in drone strikes, thereby forgoing the opportunity to question them and potentially learn life-saving intelligence, or depends on foreign countries’ willingness to keep them in custody.

This raises a host of difficult questions for Brennan to answer. Does Brennan still believe that the CIA’s interrogation program saved lives? If so, why isn’t such a program necessary today? As Brennan himself remarked in 2007, the CIA used “the most serious types of enhanced procedures” (e.g., waterboarding) on “only a small proportion” of the detained terrorists. In fact, the CIA waterboarded only three captured terrorists and discontinued the practice in 2003. Why shouldn’t the CIA or other U.S. authorities still capture and question terror-

ists at American-run facilities, using techniques short of the “most serious” ones? Does Brennan think that potentially life-saving intelligence is being missed because the United States does not have a robust detention capability? What does he think America’s detention policy for suspected terrorists such as Harzi should be?

On April 30, 2012, Brennan delivered a speech at the Wilson Center in Washington, D.C. His main theme was that President Obama had encouraged the national security team to be more transparent when it comes to the most controversial issues of the day. “A few months after taking office,” Brennan said, “the president traveled to the National Archives, where he discussed how national

security requires a delicate balance between secrecy and transparency.” Obama “pledged to share as much information as possible with the American people ‘so that they can make informed judgments and hold us accountable,’” Brennan continued. Obama “has consistently encouraged those of us on his national security team to be as open and candid as possible as well.”

There is much to inquire about concerning Brennan’s attempts to maintain this “balance between secrecy and transparency.”

The press has already reported on Brennan’s possible role in various national security leaks. In May 2012, a U.S. official disclosed to journalists that a mole within Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), which the Obama administration describes as al Qaeda’s most dangerous affiliate, had disrupted a nascent plot to blow up an airliner. AQAP had already attempted to bring down a Detroit-bound airplane on Christmas Day 2009 and two cargo planes the following year. AQAP has, therefore, shown its keen interest in attacking the airline industry. This makes the leak of a secret agent inside AQAP’s ranks especially troubling.

Mark Hosenball of Reuters first reported that the night before news of the mole broke, Brennan held a teleconference with “former counterterrorism advisers who have become frequent commentators on TV news shows.” During the conversation, Brennan downplayed the seriousness of the plot, saying that the United States had “inside control” over it. A few minutes later, one of the call’s participants, former counterterrorism official Richard Clarke, made the same claim during an appearance



John Brennan

on ABC's *World News Tonight*. Clarke concluded during another appearance on ABC a few hours later that the United States "had somebody on the inside who wasn't going to let it happen." Reuters reported: "The next day's headlines were filled with news of a U.S. spy planted inside Yemen-based Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, who had acquired the latest, nonmetallic model of the underwear bomb and handed it over to U.S. authorities."

The White House, of course, denies that classified information was divulged during the teleconference and says it is "ridiculous" to suspect Brennan was involved in the leak. "White House officials and others on the call insist that Brennan disclosed no classified information during that conference call and chose his words carefully to avoid doing so," Reuters reported.

But other than a secret agent within AQAP's ranks, what could "inside control" possibly mean? Clarke easily made the connection. If Brennan did not leak this information to the press, who did? Does he know? Did anyone leak this intelligence at the behest of Brennan?

Eight months have passed since the leak, and we still don't know the answers. That is hardly a model of transparency. Meanwhile, the British were heavily involved in the operation and have lamented that it had to be terminated early. Authorities were hoping to collect additional intelligence.

The senators will undoubtedly probe this and other leaks. But they should focus on the other side of this coin as well: transparency.

The existence of a spy inside AQAP is, quite obviously, the type of secret the U.S. government should keep. But the government also routinely classifies information unnecessarily. As a result, information that should be made public isn't.

During his Wilson Center speech, for instance, Brennan cited the documents captured in Osama bin Laden's lair in Abbottabad, Pakistan. Brennan said that the al Qaeda master's files show al Qaeda "is losing badly," "continue[s] to struggle to communicate with subordinates and affiliates," and is "struggling to attract new recruits." What's more, "some members are giving up and returning home, no doubt aware that this is a fight they will never win."

Brennan also announced that some of the Abbottabad documents would be released online a few days later by West Point's Combating Terrorism Center, and indeed some were. In all, 17 documents were declassified and released. Press accounts reveal that 6,000 or so documents had been translated by that point. This means that well under 1 percent of the cache was made available to the public.

Presumably, the documents selected for release were ones the administration thought would buoy its case about al Qaeda's impending demise. But reporting on the documents that were not released undermines Brennan's analysis.

ProPublica cited an anonymous U.S. intelligence official who concluded that bin Laden "managed to retain authority over al Qaeda's affiliates in Yemen, North Africa, and Iraq." Towards the end of his life, bin Laden did not enjoy "the same degree of detailed involvement" he once had, this official said, "but he played a huge role in [the] leadership" of the affiliates.

The *Guardian* (U.K.) reported that bin Laden's files show extensive collusion between the Taliban and al Qaeda—a finding that further complicates the Obama administration's ill-conceived effort to split the two. And Bruce Riedel, a former Obama adviser, told the *Hindustan Times* that bin Laden's files show he had a close relationship with the head of Lashkar-e-Taiba, a Pakistan-based terrorist group closely allied with al Qaeda that was responsible for the siege of Mumbai in November 2008. Riedel explained, in fact, that the files "suggested a much larger direct al Qaeda role in the planning of the Mumbai attacks than many assumed."

How many files, in total, were captured in bin Laden's compound? Why haven't more of bin Laden's files been released? If Obama and Brennan are serious about "shar[ing] as much information as possible with the American people," then most of bin Laden's cache should be made available to the public.

There is also the administration's lack of transparency with respect to the September 11, 2012, terrorist attack in Benghazi, Libya. Brennan is not camera-shy, to put it mildly. Yet in the weeks following the assault, Brennan was missing in action, allowing other administration officials to explain to the public (erroneously) what had transpired.

Four months after the attack, we still have no answers. We can piece together from press reporting several of the al Qaeda-linked personalities and organizations that were responsible, but the administration has not provided any real analysis of the culprits. We know, for example, that terrorists trained by an Egyptian named Muhammad Jamal al Kashef, a longtime ally of al Qaeda emir Ayman al Zawahiri, took part in the attack. The U.S. government reportedly requested that the Egyptians arrest Kashef, and they did.

Has the United States been able to question Kashef? If not, why? What do we know about the role of al Qaeda-affiliated parties in the attack? Why did the administration, including President Obama, insist for weeks that the assault evolved out of a demonstration against an anti-Islam film when we know that there never was a demonstration in Benghazi? Why has the United States not responded with military force against any of the terrorists responsible? None of the Benghazi suspects are in custody. Why?

Senators should seek answers to these questions and more before they vote to approve Brennan's appointment.

—Thomas Foscelyn

Totally, Unequivocally Hagel

On the day he was nominated as secretary of defense, Chuck Hagel gave an interview to the *Lincoln Journal Star*. His critics had “completely distorted” his record, he complained. Rather, Hagel claimed, his record shows “unequivocal, total support for Israel.”

This is unequivocal, total nonsense.

Chuck Hagel was once proud *not* to be numbered among the “unequivocal, total” supporters of Israel. Hagel was once proud of his standing as a lonely figure in American public life who would stand up to those who unequivocally and totally supported Israel. Hagel was once a senator who, unlike his colleagues, was proud not to have been intimidated by “the Jewish lobby.” Hagel was proud of his votes against pro-Israel resolutions backed by the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), aka “the Jewish lobby.” Hagel was contemptuous of those who signed AIPAC-endorsed pro-Israel letters.

No, Chuck Hagel was not one of those “unequivocal, total” supporters of Israel like his colleagues in the United States Senate. No siree!

For example, during the 2002 Palestinian terror campaign against Israel, Senator Chuck Hagel was willing to say that “both Israelis and Palestinians are trapped in a war not of their making,” and that “Israel must take steps to show its commitment to peace.” After he left the Senate, Hagel became co-chair of the Atlantic Council. His vice chair on the board is Chas Freeman. Remember him? Freeman had been forced to withdraw as a nominee for an Obama administration intelligence post in 2009 because his hostility to Israel was so manifest. New York senator Chuck Schumer said, after Freeman withdrew, “His statements against Israel were way over the top and

severely out of step with the administration.”

Hagel evidently hasn’t persuaded Freeman to mend his ways. Just a month ago, on December 1, 2012, here’s what Hagel’s vice chair, Chas Freeman, declared:

In some countries, like the United States, Israel can rely upon a “fifth column” of activist sympathizers to amplify its messages, to rebut and discredit statements that contradict its arguments, facts, and fabrications, and to impugn the moral standing of those who make such statements.

So far as we know, Chuck Hagel had no problem with what Chas Freeman said in December 2012. But in January 2013, Chuck Hagel morphed into Mr. Unequivocal and Total Supporter of Israel.

Chuck Hagel is, we suppose, entitled to try to pull off a confirmation conversion. A bunch of conversions, actually. Maybe he now really is pro-gay rights and pro-choice. Maybe in those cases his Senate voting record was merely a matter of political convenience. But Hagel’s contempt for those who were truly pro-Israel was so ingrained and so longstanding that one is entitled to doubt that his confirmation flip-flop on Israel is sincere. He’ll argue, under the pressure of confirmation hearings, that his comment about his colleagues being intimidated by “the Jewish lobby” meant no disrespect either for his fellow senators or for Jews. He won’t mean it.

When Hagel spoke of “the Jewish lobby,” he meant above all AIPAC. When he expressed disdain for various resolutions and letters, he was expressing

disdain for AIPAC. Where is AIPAC on the Hagel nomination? So far, on the sidelines. Why? The organization appears to feel it can’t afford to antagonize the Obama administration, that it has a responsibility to maintain as much access to the administration in power as possible. One could respond: What price access? After all, as one wit mordantly commented, “If large groups in the organized Jewish community didn’t have political access, who knows what kind of anti-Israel politicians who loathe ‘the Jewish lobby’ might end up getting nominated for high-ranking positions?”

But in a way it’s good to have AIPAC sit this battle out. When the Senate votes not to confirm Chuck Hagel as secretary of defense, no one will be able to blame “the Jewish lobby.” Though somehow we think Chuck Hagel and his friends will. Totally and unequivocally.

—William Kristol



Chuck Hagel

Obama's Second Term Plan

Attack, attack, and attack some more.

BY FRED BARNES



In 2011, Treasury Secretary Tim Geithner was instrumental in guiding President Obama away from rejecting a deal with Republicans on increasing the debt limit. Geithner was almost alone, the adult in White House discussions on handling GOP demands. The president and his other advisers had political and ideological misgivings about a deal. Geithner's concern was

bigger. He feared an economic collapse.

In February, Obama and Republicans will face a new struggle over the debt limit. The president says he won't trade spending cuts for an agreement to raise the limit, as he did two years ago at Geithner's insistence. Indeed, he says he won't negotiate with Republicans, nor will his aides. He's stamped his foot and laid down the law. No deal.

This time, Geithner won't be in a position to restrain Obama. He's stepping down as Treasury secretary,

and last week White House chief of staff Jacob Lew was nominated as his successor. Lew is no Geithner. An economist, Geithner was president of the New York Federal Reserve—a financial post of enormous importance—before becoming Treasury chief. Lew is a Democratic apparatchik who's spent 30 years working for Tip O'Neill, Bill Clinton, and Obama. He's a professional subordinate.

The switch at the Treasury Department and the bluster of Obama give us a preview of the president's second term. Obama isn't quite out of control, but he's getting close. Reelection has not only emboldened him, it's also prompted him to mock and belittle Republicans. "If anything, he's becoming more, not less, polarizing," says Peter Wehner, a former presidential adviser to George W. Bush.

In December, Obama threatened House speaker John Boehner he'd use his Inaugural Address and State of the Union speech to blame Republicans if they didn't knuckle under on the fiscal cliff, which they did. A few weeks later, he declared at a White House event that Republicans have "another thing coming" if they expect an accord on deficit reduction in 2013 to rely heavily on spending cuts. "We don't have a spending problem," he told Boehner, only a "health care problem." Meanwhile, he's increasing health care spending, not curbing it.

In his new cabinet, the president will have no one with independent stature to pacify him. Defense Secretary Leon Panetta, a highly regarded figure in Washington for more than two decades, is being replaced by former Republican senator Chuck Hagel, assuming he wins Senate confirmation. Hagel is a lesser figure. Obama's choice as CIA director, John Brennan, lacks the credentials of his two predecessors, General David Petraeus and Panetta. And the president's next chief

GARY LOCKE

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of staff is sure to lack the Washington standing of his first chief, Rahm Emanuel, now mayor of Chicago.

This bodes conflict, not compromise. Republicans who met with Lew in negotiations over the debt limit and fiscal cliff found him to be highly ideological, obstinate, and utterly impervious to their pleas for spending cuts and entitlement reforms. And Obama must have liked Lew's performance, because he's promoted him.

With the debt limit looming, is Lew going to tell the president he'd be wise to accept Republican spending cuts to get the debt ceiling raised, as Geithner did? Not likely. Even if Lew did, would he have enough influence to get Obama to go along? Maybe not.

And in a pinch, would Lew deliver the kind of apocalyptic warning that Geithner did? "We've lived through government shutdowns," Geithner told Obama, according to Bob Woodward's account in *The Price of Politics*. "It's one thing to have a government shut down. It's another thing to have an economy shut down."

Nor should we expect Hagel or Brennan or anyone else in Obama 2.0 to tell the president what he doesn't want to hear. Speaking truth to power or simply delivering a few morsels of bad news is not a trait associated with yes men.

Besides, as Obama demonstrated in his reelection campaign, he is loath to buck Democratic interest groups. "To do a bipartisan deal a president must be willing to challenge (or ignore) his political base," notes former director of Bush's National Economic Council Keith Hennessey. "Obama did that on the Afghanistan surge [in 2009]. That's it. And you can't just sit back and hope that a bipartisan deal will fall in your lap. You have to proactively challenge your party to make it happen."

Obama isn't proactive in that way. On *Meet the Press* in late December, David Gregory asked the president if the "leadership falls on you" to reach a bipartisan deal—in this case, a fiscal cliff deal. Obama ducked the question. In truth, he doesn't accept the responsibility that when all else

fails, he, as president, must be the ultimate dealmaker.

He is proactive, however, in a different sense. Rather than compromise with Republicans, he prefers to bludgeon them into a deal almost entirely on his terms. The fiscal cliff deal seems to have whetted his appetite.

Obama is so eager to take on Republicans that he hasn't bothered to produce a new agenda for his next four years. This is unusual. Presidents normally offer "A Road Map for the Future of America" or something like that, and perhaps Obama will do so in his Inaugural and State of the Union speeches.

But don't get your hopes up. For now, the president is concentrating on

leftovers from his first term—immigration, roads and bridges, energy, gun control. These are issues on which he appears confident of defeating Republicans and, if all goes well, harming them politically.

Tax reform, entitlement reform, serious deficit and debt reduction, a grand bargain on spending and taxes—those are off the table, given that they require real compromise on both sides. And though the economy is dragging and tax incentives and regulatory relief are needed to invigorate it, these are off-limits to Obama. Is there anyone in his orbit prepared to step up and advise him to propose them anyway, for the good of the country? In a word, no. ♦

The Mother of All Solyndras

China's solar power debacle.

BY YING MA

When solar panel maker Solyndra declared bankruptcy in September 2011, the Obama administration defended its \$535 million loan guarantee to the company by touting the need to compete with China. At a congressional hearing, Jonathan Silver, then executive director of the Energy Department's Loan Programs Office, said, "[In 2010, China] alone provided more than \$30 billion in credit to the country's largest solar manufacturers through the government-controlled China Development Bank. That's roughly 20 times larger than America's investment in the same time period."

Since then, China has shown the world that massive government subsidies are no guarantee of business success. Today, the solar industry

worldwide is suffering from oversupply, weak demand, and depressed prices, and many of China's solar manufacturers are fighting huge financial losses, debt, and bankruptcy. Not surprisingly, the Obama administration, which was eager to follow China down the path of spending big on clean energy, has had little to say about the lessons to be learned from the current disarray of China's heavily subsidized solar industry.

In the past five years or so, China's solar producers have risen from relative insignificance to world dominance. Their success has been driven by the hard work of Chinese businessmen who chased after capital, entrepreneurs who implemented business plans, and workers who toiled in production plants in polluted cities. Yet the hand of the Chinese government has also been continuously visible.

Bent on promoting China's

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leadership in green technology, Beijing has directed a flood of government subsidies, tax breaks, and massive credit lines from state banks into the solar industry, and local governments have offered benefits like cheap land. In the process, China became the largest solar exporter in the world. Its top manufacturers, such as Suntech Power, Trina Solar, Yingli Solar, JA Solar, and LDK Solar, were publicly listed on U.S. stock exchanges. For

rush to boost capacity in a hot new industry seemed like a great idea until the market sank. First the 2008 global financial crisis caused a worldwide economic downturn. Then the financial turmoil plaguing Europe since 2010 caused countries like Germany, Italy, and France to reduce government subsidies for solar power significantly. According to the Chinese press, some 70 percent of China's photovoltaic solar modules are exported

face a gloomy outlook. The industry may have reaped enormous government financial support that drew open envy from President Obama; but according to the state newspaper *China Daily*, numerous small and medium-sized solar cell manufacturers have gone bankrupt, and more than 80 percent of China's 43 polysilicon companies have stopped production, as prices and orders have declined. China's largest solar manufacturers are battling severe financial problems.

LDK Solar, the largest maker of solar wafers in the world, faces a mountain of debt totaling about \$3.6 billion. Xinyu, the company's hometown in Jiangxi Province, has come to the rescue. Last July, the city government approved a measure to fund approximately \$80 million of LDK's loans. Then in October, LDK raised some \$23 million by selling a 19.9 percent stake to Heng Rui Xin Energy, a renewable energy company partly owned by Xinyu.

Suntech, the world's largest solar panel maker, also needed a bailout from its local government. Burdened

with over \$2 billion of debt, it received nearly \$32 million in emergency funds in September. The loan was organized by the city of Wuxi in Jiangsu Province, where Suntech is headquartered, and was extended by the local branches of state banks, including the Bank of China and the China Development Bank.

Local bailouts provide much-needed cash to large employers, but they do not necessarily please central planners. Beijing, well aware of the overcapacity, has instructed China's solar industry to consolidate. In late December, Premier Wen Jiabao chaired a meeting of the State Council, China's cabinet, to reemphasize what everyone knew to be Beijing's wish: Let the solar industry reduce production and undergo mergers and reorganizations. Local governments,



The head of a Chinese solar cell company in his plant, which was closed after a U.S. anti-dumping ruling

the year 2012, Solarbuzz, a market research website, estimated that China would account for 76 percent of all solar wafer production in the world.

Yet China has also saturated the solar industry with overcapacity. A recent solar market research report released by GTM Research and the Solar Energy Association reveals that global solar manufacturing capacity stands at 70 gigawatts, even though only an estimated 31 gigawatts are needed. China is responsible for much of the glut, and as another GTM report cited by the *New York Times* indicates, Chinese companies alone had the ability to manufacture 50 gigawatts of solar panels last year.

Inconveniently for the Obama administration, those market forces that it likes to dismiss affect even companies favored by the state. China's

to Europe. Thus, Europe's budget cutbacks have significantly weakened demand for solar imports from China.

In addition, polysilicon, the essential raw material for photovoltaic cell and module products, went from severe shortage to growth in worldwide manufacturing capacity beginning in 2010. As polysilicon became more abundant, the prices of solar products dropped, causing the profit margins of solar companies, including Chinese ones, to plummet.

Meanwhile, it has not helped that the U.S. Commerce Department imposed tariffs on Chinese solar products in 2012, while the same year the European Union proceeded to conduct investigations into anti-dumping practices and unfair government subsidies in the Chinese solar industry.

As a result, Chinese solar companies

frightened by the prospect of massive layoffs if large solar employers go bankrupt, have ignored Beijing's call. Whatever the Obama administration may believe about state omnipotence or the Chinese government's power to push clean energy projects with a snap of the fingers, state planning is hardly so simple or efficient in practice.

For a state-driven economy like China's to outcompete market liberalism, it would have to routinely pick the right winners and losers, according to Peter Thiel, president of Clarium Capital Management. But Thiel, founder of PayPal, an early investor in Facebook and LinkedIn, and a man who knows something about picking winners and losers, noted in a phone interview nearly three years ago that he is skeptical that central planning can get the job done, especially when it attempts to shape industries not yet proven and innovation not yet seen.

The Obama administration lacked the same foresight, and its hubris and hostility toward free markets have led it to waste taxpayer money on Solyndra and other clean energy projects. Some of the companies that have filed for bankruptcy since Solyndra's failure include electric car battery maker A123 Systems, which received \$249 million of stimulus money; energy storage systems maker Beacon Power Corp., which received a \$43 million loan guarantee from the Energy Department; and solar conversion technology developer Satcon Technology Corporation, recipient of a \$3 million grant.

The investment losses incurred by the Obama administration in its green energy portfolio no doubt pale in comparison to the billions spent by the Chinese government to nurture and prop up its renewable energy companies. Nevertheless, the turmoil in the Chinese solar industry teaches that massive state spending cannot forestall changes in market conditions, though it can distort market incentives and lead to overcapacity, inefficiencies, and other unintended consequences. The logic of the free market applies across national borders and without regard to the wishes of big-government dreamers. ♦

And Miles to Go Before We're Taxed

The green plan to have Uncle Sam watch your odometer. **BY ETHAN EPSTEIN**

Give the environmental movement credit: When it comes to reducing vehicle emissions, it has won a stupendous victory. Since 1975, when the first federal mileage per gallon standards were introduced, the average mpg for American-driven cars has zoomed from less than 15 to nearly 35. Ever-more stringent emission standards from Washington, growing environmentalist sentiment among the general public, and rising gas prices have all played a part in this phenomenon. So has the bevy of tax subsidies that the federal government offers for buying hybrids and other low-emission vehicles. Federal and state gas taxes, too, have been a potent force in encouraging drivers to switch to more fuel-efficient cars; at a rate of 18.4 cents a gallon, any driver can greatly reduce his annual federal tax bill by simply buying less fuel.

But now the green movement's hard-won gains against emissions are bumping up against another of its passions: tax revenues. Because more and more Americans have switched to less fuel-hungry cars (and because some Americans have dropped driving altogether), gas tax receipts have fallen precipitously. It's a "problem" created directly by the success of environmentalist goals.

Enter the prickly, greener-than-thou Representative Earl Blumenauer, a Democrat from Oregon, who wants

to require the Treasury Department to "study" ways to replace the gas tax with a vehicle-miles traveled (VMT) tax.

Blumenauer—who fulfills the *Portlandia* stereotype by wearing an unwieldy bicycle pin on his lapel—has long been a proponent of a VMT tax. Claiming that "it is time to get creative and find smart ways to rebuild and

renew America's deteriorating infrastructure," he introduced a bill in December that would have forced the Treasury Department to "establish a pilot program to study alternatives to the current system of taxing motor vehicle fuels." The bill as drafted only mentions one "alternative": a tax "based on the number of miles driven."

(The choice of having the Treasury Department study the VMT tax rather than the Department of Transportation is a shrewd one, by the way, because last year the House voted to ban the DOT from studying a VMT.)

Blumenauer's bill died in committee last month. According to his spokesman Patrick Malone, however, Blumenauer plans on reintroducing the bill in the next Congress. It's an idea that's gaining momentum. President Obama claims to oppose the VMT tax, though his transportation secretary, Ray LaHood, has said it's a proposal that "should be looked at." Several European countries are planning to implement VMT taxes in the coming decade.

Perhaps the most striking thing about the VMT tax is that it appears in direct conflict with green goals. If



Earl Blumenauer

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a Prius is suddenly taxed at the same rate as a Ford Expedition, after all, the government has removed a powerful incentive for driving cars that pollute less. Some VMT tax supporters say it “could” be structured so that less-efficient vehicles are taxed more heavily. But isn’t this precisely what the gas tax accomplishes? Why switch to a complicated new system only to maintain the same fundamental structure? It’s also simply not true that all cars are equally culpable in wearing down the roads; numerous studies have shown that heavy trucks cause the vast majority of damage to roads and highways.

There’s an obvious privacy issue, too. Because odometers are relatively easily tampered with (and besides, using odometers to gauge miles driven would require the government to engage in frequent and costly car mileage inspections), cars would almost certainly need to be outfitted with some form of government tracking device. Blumenauer waves these concerns aside by saying that the VMT tax can be administered in a way that “protects personal privacy.” Tellingly, he provides no details as to how. A VMT tax pilot program involving about 50 drivers in Blumenauer’s home state of Oregon that’s been in effect since 2006 isn’t encouraging. According to *Governing* magazine, “That study involved using GPS devices to collect data on the number of miles traveled by each motorist, transferring the data to gas stations, and levying the appropriate fee when drivers filled their tanks.”

Rep. Blumenauer and other VMT tax proponents are right about one thing: Highway maintenance is suffering and the highway trust fund is dwindling. The American Society of Civil Engineers has given American infrastructure a grade of D. Over the past four years, Congress has transferred nearly \$50 billion from the general fund to the highway trust fund just to shore it up. But this sorry state of affairs isn’t only a result of falling gas tax revenues; the highway trust fund is also suffering from some serious mission creep.

A recent GAO study reported that

between 2004 and 2008, some \$78 billion from the highway trust fund was used for “purposes other than construction and maintenance of highways and bridges.” A 2009 report prepared by the offices of Senators Tom Coburn and John McCain found that “Congress raids the highway trust fund for pet projects while bridges and roads crumble.” For example, states must now spend a certain percentage of their highway trust funds on “transportation enhancement” projects. Eligible “transportation enhancement” categories include the “provision of pedestrian and bicycle facilities,” the “acquisition of scenic or historic easement and sites,” and the “establishment of transportation museums.” In a development to warm the cockles of Rep. Blumenauer’s heart, between 2004 and 2008, \$2 billion from the highway trust fund was spent on 5,500

projects for pedestrians and bicycles. Yet again, the dwindling of the highway trust fund—a problem that only a VMT tax can fix!—is a direct result of policies that Blumenauer and his green allies support.

Novelist J.G. Ballard once wrote that the personal car “enshrines a basically old-fashioned idea: freedom.” In a way, critics of the contemporary greens owe Blumenauer a debt of gratitude. A VMT tax, fundamentally, is a punishment for driving, regardless of how many emissions your car spews—and even if it doesn’t spew any at all! By decoupling the hatred for cars from the justifiable hatred of pollution, Blumenauer has confirmed what many critics have long suspected about some of the most zealous greens: It’s not just that they love the planet. They’re suspicious of freedom, too. ♦

The Ally of My Ally

Asia’s divided democracies.

BY JOSEPH A. BOSCO

Asia’s democracies need to get their acts together to address a common danger from the region’s authoritarian/totalitarian powers. Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan face rising challenges from China and/or North Korea. All have security arrangements with the United States to deter or confront those threats.

Yet territorial claims and historical grievances frequently align those democratic states more with China’s positions than with each other’s, producing the paradoxical perception among them that the ally of my ally is

my adversary. While American presidential candidates were vowing to get tough with China, Asian politicians pledged to stand up to their freedom-loving neighbors.

China is happy to stoke the divisions among America’s friends and allies, constraining U.S. diplomacy and complicating its regional security planning.

■ *China and Taiwan vs. Japan:* Japan controls the Senkaku Islands (claimed as the Diaoyu by China and the Diaoyutai by Taiwan). Washington takes no position on the merits of the three countries’ claims but includes the islands under the U.S.-Japan security umbrella. China sees that as provocative U.S. meddling on Japan’s side of the dispute.

In August, Taiwan’s president, Ma

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Ying-jeou, proposed an East China Sea Peace Initiative involving trilateral negotiations, shared resources, and a seagoing code of conduct. China is willing to share resources, at least initially, but unwilling to treat Taiwan as an equal negotiating partner rather than as a province of China.

Recent maritime and air clashes pitted Chinese and Taiwanese craft against Japanese ships and planes. American officials have expressed concern that Taipei might join Beijing in a united front against its treaty ally Japan. Taiwan has assured the United States it will not.

■ *China and Taiwan vs. South-east Asia:* In the South China Sea, Beijing and Taipei assert identical sweeping claims, encompassing virtually the entire area, against the interests of Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia, and Brunei. China takes a far more aggressive approach than Taiwan, rejecting multilateral negotiations through the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and a regional code of conduct. Taiwan favors both, along with most countries in the region and the United States.

Still, like China, Taiwan has not laid out the specific land features that underlie its maritime claims, as dictated by the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. Taipei could boost its credentials as a responsible international stakeholder by adopting the UNCLOS methodology and distinguishing itself from Beijing's bullying approach—a Chinese official, suggesting might makes right, warned ASEAN representatives: “You are small and China is big.”

■ *China and South Korea vs. Japan:* Even more inflammatory than specific territorial and sovereignty issues are the lingering legacies of Japan's conduct during the 1930s and 1940s. Japanese apologies and compensation payments never satisfy China or South Korea. Beijing deliberately keeps nationalist resentment smoldering as a substitute for domestic political legitimacy and a tactic to keep

Tokyo on the defensive. Since China's Communist government killed millions more Chinese than Imperial Japan did, Beijing's constant finger-pointing at democratic Japan reeks of cynicism and hypocrisy.

As for South Korea's grievances, all of Japan's good words and good works are undermined by Tokyo's grudging acknowledgment of the “comfort women” outrage, when tens

missile programs, which simultaneously threaten Japan, South Korea, and the United States.

Given those real and present dangers, countries in the region no longer have the luxury of relitigating dead history. Asia's democracies would do well to match America's rebalancing to Asia by their own pivot away from narrow nationalism to their broader Asian security interests. Americans,



Okay, but can we talk about China now?

of thousands of South Korean and other Asian women were used as sex slaves by Japan's military in WWII. The skewed history presented at the Yasukuni war museum and in textbooks provides added ammunition for those who wish to argue that Japan, a model international citizen, has not truly come to grips with its past. Democratic Japan needs to preserve its moral superiority over both the last century's Japan and today's China.

For its part, Japan challenges South Korea's possession of the Dokdo/Takeshima islets near the Korean Peninsula. But in virtually all the other regional confrontations, China is the common element. It backs its claims with growing military power, and the apparent willingness to use it. It also protects and enables North Korea's reckless and illegal nuclear/

Filipinos, and other Southeast Asians have left the bitter past safely behind them. Other countries in the region need to do the same.

The Philippines' foreign minister recently called on Japan to bolster its military capabilities to counter China's aggressive rise. He knows the difference between Imperial Japan, democratic Japan, and the People's Republic of China—and which poses the real, present threat to regional peace and stability.

Despite the recriminatory tone of the recent elections in South Korea and Japan, both countries chose leaders who welcome strong security ties with the United States. Wise and persistent U.S. leadership can help Asia's democracies accept the strategic logic that says the ally of my ally is also my ally. ♦

A Teacher's Plea

The GOP shouldn't write off educators.

BY COLLEEN HYLAND

As Republicans discuss the future of the party, abandoning conservative values need not be part of the conversation. The party can appeal to larger segments of the electorate without forsaking core principles. One case in point is a group the party has long written off: public school teachers.

Conservative values go hand in hand with teaching. Teachers see the evidence every day that stable families produce well-adjusted kids who succeed in the classroom. Many teachers are people of faith. Most of us are proud Americans who say the pledge every day with our students and mean it.

We teach kids how to show respect and use proper manners by modeling them ourselves. We stress personal accountability. We are people who believe in the political process and show up each Election Day because we love our country and are responsible citizens.

Broach the idea of limited government in education and you will find many takers. Teachers are choking under federal, state, and local mandates and regulations. They are stymied by an unrealistic amount of testing that takes time out of teaching and the joy out of learning. We have been hit with layer upon layer of government bureaucracy that pulls us in countless directions. Teachers spend too much of their day with redundant paperwork, wrestling with standards that are overly complex and often contradictory. Get

the Department of Education off our backs. Keep it as an information clearinghouse, but give teachers and school districts more control, not less. We crave local control for our local problems. Speak about deregulating our classrooms and we are all ears.

Talk about teachers as if you actually like them, and

mean it. Every time you begin to paint teachers with the same broad stroke, think about your favorite teacher. Would you say that of him or her? If not, rethink what you are saying. Conservative disdain for the profession is ubiquitous. Jeb Bush's speech at the GOP convention about "failing

schools" made me cringe, as did Chris Christie's. Their criticisms may be aimed at unions, but their angry tenor feels dismissive of all public school teachers. Powerful men talking down to hardworking women is not an image the GOP should be promoting.

And face it: The majority of teachers are women. If you can appeal to us with realistic plans to empower teachers, you not only garner the votes of women, you gain union votes, too. Whether it's coming from administrators or politicians, teachers resent top-down demands that belittle their expertise and ignore their experience. Give teachers credit for what we do as professionals. We are facing a collapsing American culture that is at odds with education in general. It is that same collapsing culture that unites conservatives in support of traditional values. Despite voting consistently for liberal candidates who actively court

their votes, most teachers I know lead fairly traditional lives that respect faith, family, country, and community. These are consistent conservative values. Highlight the similarities.

Respect the professionalism of teachers. We are college educated and many have attended top universities. Teachers earn master's degrees, sometimes second master's degrees. They regularly update their skills with continued course work, summer institutes with experts in their content area, and other forms of professional development. Do people really want a novice doctor in the operating room? Is a recent law school graduate anyone's top choice to defend them in court? Do people want a first-time contractor building their new home? They obviously prefer seasoned professionals. The same is true in the classroom. School boards cut costs by hiring inexperienced teachers. It helps the bottom line. It does not help students. Great educators develop over time, as in all the professions.

Conservatives promote school choice, which is fine, but closing public schools or requiring more hurdles of teachers in public schools than those in charter schools is unfair. Public school teachers also resent being held to higher standards and then admonished when they don't meet them due to lack of resources or training. Public school teachers see the deck being stacked against them with the school choice argument. Besides, this argument is irrelevant to teachers in rural areas where school choice is a logistical impossibility. Teachers work in communities. They work to build up their schools, each of which has its own character, history, and traditions. Generations have passed through the doors of our buildings. Closing a school is never a sign of policy success. Don't support those who would tear down schools in the name of progress.

Teachers are not government civil servants, so don't lump us in the same category with federal and state workers. Teachers are typically hired by their local school boards and work for students and parents, not for the government. Having worked in the "real world" before becoming a teacher, I



Maybe she'd even vote Republican.

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have a unique perspective on what motivates those who dedicate their lives to this noble profession, and it's not the salary and benefits, it's the dream of helping kids. How many civil servants moonlight to make ends meet? How many federal workers use their own money for basic supplies? Respect for and interest in our perspective would go a long way to bridge the political gap with educators. Teachers want to make our country better, too.

And please freshen up your talking points. Tenure as most people think of it is a thing of the past. Please stop acting as if teachers have jobs for life. Nationwide, new state requirements tie teacher positions to test scores and other markers. Teachers support tenure to ensure they receive a fair hearing should a grievance arise. We also support tenure to ensure academic freedom. Specious mandates enter our classrooms on a regular basis—including faddish instructional methods conceived at liberal universities, and promoted with little or no evidence that they work. With tenure, experienced teachers, who know what is best for their students, can resist such mandates when necessary.

Unions are here to stay. Instead of dogging unions, appeal to the better nature of teachers. Some unions have voted to give up wages to help alleviate their districts' budget deficits and to save teacher jobs so students can receive a well-rounded education. Republicans crow about respecting contracts when it comes to the mortgage crisis and bailing out the banks, but have no qualms about rewriting union contracts with school districts. Respect the agreements that have been negotiated in good faith on both sides.

Finally, please do not write off all teachers as entrenched liberals. Some are, but many simply feel that the only respect they receive comes from the Democratic party. They would welcome an invitation into the big tent of the GOP. Changing the way conservatives interact with public school teachers, without diluting conservative values, would benefit the Republican party and by extension the future of our country. It's a winning proposition. ♦

Hunting . . . for the Hell of It

Hipsters need not apply.

BY GEOFFREY NORMAN

The zeitgeist has always been wonderfully elastic. Attitudes change and apostasy is tolerated if you are cool enough to pull it off. There was a time when country music wasn't cool. When Clint Eastwood was just not acceptable (Dirty Harry . . . *really?*). Cigarettes were



And hoofed rat is tasty, too.

very cool back when Bogie and Bacall lit up. Then . . . no more. Cocaine was really cool and it stayed around but lost its intellectual, if not its pharmacological, allure.

But some things seemed somehow, reassuringly, always beyond the pale. Things that no cultural arms would ever grow long enough to embrace. Evangelical religion, for instance. Marching bands and majorettes. Francisco Franco (as opposed to, say, Fidel Castro). And hunting.

If you were a hunter, you knew that what you did was utterly unacceptable, and that counted for something. You

got used to being regarded in a fashion that was condescending at best. You were some kind of knuckle-dragging rube, rural trash, unable to keep up. More likely, though, the verdict on you was even harsher than that. You killed things, as was once explained to me, to make up for some deep inadequacy, primitively sexual in nature. What else, after all, could account for the gun which was plainly a substitute for . . . well, you know what.

The contempt for hunting, and hunters, was solid and impregnable—and if you were a hunter, kind of comforting. After a couple of encounters, you quit arguing the point. Discussion was impossible and that was fine. You knew what you knew. And nothing is more reassuring than permanence. Hunting was unhip and would remain so, forever and always.

And the fact that it was unhip gave it added value. Without getting all deep and philosophical about it, most serious hunters knew that what they did was not trendy, and that was one of the things they found most compelling about it. Hunting was a part of the human adventure whose antecedents are so old and fundamental that they are impervious to fashion. Contemporary culture would never come around, and hunters were fine with that.

But now . . . well, according to a recent piece in *Slate*, written by Emma Marris, hunting is now “undeniably in vogue among the bearded, bicycle-riding, locavore set,” with “many of these new hunters . . . taking up the activity for ethical and environmental reasons.”

They kill, you understand, for the very best of reasons. Their intentions are pure and their justifications are

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rational. They don't hunt out of some deep, atavistic impulse, but because they recognize that "eating animals you hunt yourself is a more ethical alternative than eating those from the current industrial agricultural system," and "getting your meat from outside the industrial food system is also better for the environment."

This does, at least, get beyond the routine, sentimental objections to hunting. The hipsters don't worry that Bambi's mother feels panic and pain or that Bambi misses her when she's gone. It is easier, these days, to consider most game animals as creatures to be harvested, not romanticized. A few decades ago, merely catching a glimpse of a whitetail deer in the woods was a rare and almost enchanted experience. Now, deer are everywhere. They are "rats with hooves" to many suburban dwellers, who have seen too many deer and grown weary of their devouring expensively landscaped lawns and gardens, their spreading Lyme disease, and their running into traffic

and causing expensive, dangerous, and sometimes fatal crashes. Anything, including hunting, that results in fewer deer is okay with them.

This proliferation of wild species—deer, turkey, Canada geese, black bear, moose—to the point where they have become nuisances is a theme of Jim Sterba's recently published *Nature Wars*, which Marris uses to ballast her arguments in the *Slate* piece.

Sterba writes gracefully, researches thoroughly, and argues persuasively for a more tough-minded approach to wildlife . . . and hunting. He and Marris make a case, then, for hunting as the solution to a problem. It is social policy, and the sort of thing a think tank might come up with after securing a grant and studying the matter for several months.

Too many animals? Well, kill them and eat the meat. Require that hunters purchase licenses so there is some revenue raised. Unless you are Bambi . . . what's not to like? You can, as Marris explains, now be a liberal and a hunter too.

And maybe that is a good thing. But you are still a killer, and even if it is good for the environment, there is that little matter of the enjoyment and the thrill. You aren't hunting to be a good citizen. Buying a hunting license isn't like joining Common Cause.

The urge is too primitive, too deeply embedded in the blood, to be accounted for rationally. No one has yet come closer than Ortega y Gasset, who put it like this in his *Meditations on Hunting*:

Pushed by reason, man is condemned to make progress, and this means that he is condemned to go farther and farther away from Nature, to construct in its place an artificial Nature. . . . [F]ar from hunting's being a "reasoned pursuit" of the animal, the greatest enemy of hunting is reason.

Ortega famously summed up the paradox that lies at the heart of hunting with this: "One does not hunt in order to kill; on the contrary, one kills in order to have hunted."

And just how hip is *that*? ♦

American Jobs and Growth Agenda

By Thomas J. Donohue

President and CEO
U.S. Chamber of Commerce

At the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, we begin the New Year by looking at how American business is doing, discussing the key challenges facing our economy, and identifying the top priorities we plan to work on.

Today, 23 million Americans are unemployed, underemployed, or have stopped looking for work. A record 47 million people qualify for food stamps. Median family income has dropped to 1995 levels. Millions of new college graduates, many of them deeply in debt, can't find promising positions in their fields. And at the current rate, our economy is growing too slowly to make a real difference.

As we consider these factors, economic growth can't be an afterthought. It must be the focus. That's why the Chamber has an ambitious plan to revitalize the economy and restore the American Dream. We will advance the *American*

Jobs and Growth Agenda to generate stronger growth, create jobs, lift incomes, and expand opportunity for all Americans.

We must start by addressing the fiscal crisis—that means slowing spending, reforming entitlement programs, and overhauling the tax code. Policymakers will soon face new deadlines around the debt ceiling, the sequestration budget cuts, and legislation to keep the government operating. These deadlines will mean more uncertainty for our economy, our businesses, and the financial markets. Our leaders must make real progress, beginning in the areas they neglected in the fiscal cliff deal—serious spending restraint and a commitment to tax and entitlement reform.

Beyond the immediate crisis, we must embrace key opportunities to drive growth in the economy. By producing more American energy, we can add jobs, revive manufacturing, generate government revenues, and improve national security. If we embrace a bold trade agenda, we can tap booming markets around the

world and boost American exports.

We must also focus on policies that are holding us back. We need to address the coming flood of new regulations that will discourage job creation and stoke uncertainty. Reforming our regulatory system is vital to ensuring our competitive edge in the global economy. And by modernizing our irrational immigration system, we can continue to attract the best and brightest to our shores and ensure that we have enough workers to sustain our economy, support our population, and stay competitive.

The Chamber will be working on these and other critical priorities—including infrastructure, health care reform, education and jobs training, and legal reform—throughout the year.

We ask America's leaders to stand up and join us in these efforts to restore opportunity and prosperity in our country.



U.S. CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
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A Small Man in a Big Job

The petty reign of Harry Reid

BY MICHAEL WARREN

In February 2010, a massive snowstorm blanketed the nation's capital and closed the federal government. Harry Reid was holed up in his condominium at the Ritz-Carlton in Washington's swanky West End neighborhood, reading the news in his pajamas. He came across an Associated Press story on the Democrats' jobs package, a mixture of spending provisions and tax credits. The story referred to the jobs bill as "light on new initiatives on boosting hiring and heavy with provisions sought by lobbyists for business." Montana's Max Baucus, the Democratic chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, and the Republican ranking member, Iowa's Chuck Grassley, had reached a deal extending several tax credits that benefited business, keeping the staffs of Reid and Mitch McConnell, the minority leader, informed of the negotiations.

When word of the deal had leaked a day earlier, liberals were incensed. Baucus, a red-state Democrat, was viewed by the left wing of the party as a patsy for conservatives. Despite increased pressure from progressives to abandon the deal, Reid appeared to be moving forward on it. "Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev., said he hopes to pass the measure this week," reported the AP.

At the Ritz-Carlton, Reid read his own words in print and made a snap decision. The next day, at a noon press conference in the Capitol, he dropped the bomb. The jobs bill, including the carefully crafted tax deal, was being scrapped, he told reporters. Reid would instead introduce a new "pared-back" bill, without the tax proposals that had

enraged the left. This was the first time Baucus had heard his hard-fought agreement was being thrown away. To the finance committee senators and staff, it was weeks of hard work down the drain. To Reid, it was business as usual.

Reid is odd, temperamental, mercurial, obstinate, and rude. He says things that "make you cringe," as one senator put it. Once, while waiting for President Obama outside the Oval Office, Reid greeted a tall female West Wing staffer by telling her she was his "favorite big woman," while Obama adviser Valerie Jarrett was his "favorite small woman." Reid quickly "clarified," telling her he only meant that she was his favorite big woman "at the White House."

In the Reid regime, the Senate operates more or less at his whim. Members are frequently caught off guard when he decides to bring a bill up for debate. Reid will promise to allow a senator to present an important amendment only to change course at the last minute and claim he never made the promise at all. I asked

Oklahoma Republican Tom Coburn, a top political opponent of Reid who nevertheless speaks highly of the majority leader personally, to describe Reid's leadership style. He paused, seemingly to think, before answering.

"I'm not sure he has one," Coburn said.

Coburn is careful with his words. Reid may be unreliable, but he also instills fear in the hearts of Republicans and Democrats alike. Baucus, who would rightfully be angry over his treatment from Reid during the tax extenders episode, declined to be interviewed for this story. So, too, did Reid's fellow Nevada senator, Republican Dean Heller, who has even more reason to dislike him. Last year, Reid took advantage of his position as majority leader to try (unsuccessfully, it turned out) to sink Heller's campaign.

Throughout 2012, Heller pushed an Internet gambling



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bill popular in Nevada—popular enough that Reid himself claimed to support it. The Senate took little action on the bill throughout the summer, and meanwhile, Heller was engaged in a tough campaign against Democrat Shelley Berkley. In September, Reid abruptly called Heller to let him know he would be bringing the Internet gambling bill to the floor within a day. He offered an ultimatum to Heller: Secure 15 additional GOP votes within the next few hours or the bill would die. Heller scrambled but couldn't deliver the votes. The bill failed, as if by Reid's design.

"It's really a failure in leadership of my friend," Reid told reporters. In the meantime, David Krone, Reid's chief of staff, gathered several reporters for Las Vegas-based news outlets into his office. Republicans on the Hill say the 45-year-old staffer is abrasive and difficult to work with but a faithful executor of Reid's schemes. Krone provided reporters with a series of private emails between himself and Heller's former chief of staff, Mac Abrams. The emails showed what looked like a disorganized effort to corral Republican support for the bill, though Heller and Republicans dispute the characterization. Nevertheless, the ploy succeeded in embarrassing Heller, earning him a bit of bad press back home in Nevada. In November, he prevailed over Berkley, but the Internet gambling law both Heller and Reid wanted remains dead. The incident was classic Reid: short-term political gain at the expense of a policy victory. It's a testament to Reid's influence, though, that Heller, a Republican who won't face reelection until 2018, is now unwilling to publicly cross his rival.

Not even President Obama has escaped the wrath of Reid—or, to be more precise, that of Reid's minion Krone. As Bob Woodward recounted in his book on the debt-ceiling negotiations of 2011, *The Price of Politics*, Krone traveled with Reid to the White House that summer during the intense debate over extending the debt limit. In the Oval Office, Reid began explaining the outline of a \$2.7 trillion debt limit extension before turning it over to Krone to explain the details. Reid's plan included another round of defense cuts that John Boehner and Mitch McConnell had "secretly pledged to honor." Obama dismissed the idea, saying he didn't trust Boehner and McConnell. Krone, Woodward writes, "either would not or could not conceal his anger" at the president:

"Mr. President, I am sorry—with all due respect—that we are in this situation that we're in, but we got handed this football on Friday night. And I didn't create this situation. The first thing that baffles me is, from my private sector experience, the first rule that I've always been taught is to have a Plan B. And it is really disheartening that you, that this White House did not have a Plan B."

Several jaws dropped as the Hill staffer blasted the president to his face.

Reporters covering Congress seem more interested in getting along with Reid than in critically examining his reign. Members of the Capitol Hill press corps regularly pass along as simple fact Reid's assertion that the Republican minority has slowed down activity in the Senate and hardly ever challenge him on it. At a recent press conference, I asked Reid to explain his tactic of blocking unwanted amendments and rushing through debate. Republicans say Reid thereby stymies meaningful debate in the Senate, so they often use parliamentary procedures to protest. Why, I asked, had he decided to gum up the amendment process in the first place? Reid dodged:

"We have to spend 8 to 10 Senate days, that's a couple weeks, to get on a bill," he said. "Because [Republicans] virtually oppose every time we try to give a bill a motion to proceed. That wastes 10 days. With that 10 days, if we didn't have to do that, we could be on a bill, there could be amendments. We've arrived at a point where we don't have time to do that."

It was a circular response. Reid has decided to limit GOP amendments because of the possibility Republicans will block bills to protest Reid's practice of limiting GOP amendments? When I shouted a follow-up at the end of the press conference—"Do you think you should open the amendment process, that it might earn you some goodwill with the Republicans?"—Reid slowly turned, looked at me, and refused to answer. "Grumpy!" a photographer noted.

Reid can be curt to reporters, which may explain some of the reluctance from the press to ruffle his feathers. In 2009, a reporter asked him to clarify a statement he had made on the Senate floor. Reid told the reporter to "turn up your hearing aid."

"It was clear for those of us who understand English," Reid sniped. He once introduced *Politico* reporter Manu Raju to an aide as "the biggest pest in Washington."

Amid the fiscal cliff negotiations late last year, Reid sparred with a young reporter over President Obama's plan, acting as if he had no knowledge of the plan's existence. "The president's fiscal cliff plan, the White House plan—why hasn't that been put up for a vote yet in the Senate, and are you planning on putting it up for a vote?" the reporter asked.

"I'm sorry, what?" Reid said, looking confused.

"The White House proposal that they floated around last week on Capitol Hill?" the reporter repeated.

"I have no idea what you're talking about, okay?" Reid responded, a small smile emerging from his lips.

The reporter was undeterred. "The White House's plan, the Treasury secretary's—." Reid cut him off with a jab.

"Do you know what the plan is?" Reid challenged. The press corps started to giggle at the back and forth.

"The plan that includes revenue and includes—." Reid cut him off again.

"What kind of revenue?"

"The top 2 percent—," the reporter shot back, though he was starting to look unsure of himself.

"And what else does he have in it?"

"The debt limit authority, as well," came the response. Reid didn't let up.

"And what else?"

Oh boy. "\$1.6 trillion in total." The reporter was losing his footing. "And the stimulus, \$200 million—."

"I think it was 50," Reid said, practically winking as the press burst out laughing. The reporter backed down, defeated.

Despite his mastery of the press, which, let's face it, is mostly on Reid's side politically anyway, there are some signs his power may be waning after six years as leader. During the protracted fiscal cliff negotiations, he accused Republican House speaker John Boehner of running a "dictatorship." Boehner reportedly responded, likely echoing the sentiments of many on Capitol Hill, by telling Reid to "go f— yourself." Republican leader Mitch McConnell practically said the same thing when he abandoned talks with Reid on the fiscal cliff and sought a more willing negotiating partner at the White House: Vice President Joe Biden. And when Reid said recently that the devastation to the Gulf Coast in 2005 by Hurricane Katrina was "nothing in comparison" to the damage done to the Northeast by Hurricane Sandy, Louisiana Republican senator David Vitter was indignant enough to call Reid an "idiot."

But for the most part, Reid remains secure as majority leader—more formidable than ever. At first glance, he doesn't look the part. He's short and thin, almost gaunt. His large hands, worn down by his years working in the Nevada mines as a young teenager, protrude awkwardly from his skinny suit jacket. Reid doesn't walk confidently so much as shuffle, a little slower these days since he's suffered from mini-strokes over the last several years. His voice is soft and pinched, sometimes barely rising above a whisper. Capitol Hill reporters grumble about straining to hear him at press conferences. Ironically, it may have been this perception of Reid—a quiet, nebbish pushover—that elevated him to his position as Democratic leader.

In 2004, after Tom Daschle of South Dakota lost reelection, the big egos of the Democratic caucus—Ted Kennedy, Hillary Clinton, Joe Biden, John Kerry, Chris Dodd—weren't eager to take on the thankless role of Democratic leader. But neither did they want to see any of the others in the position. Reid, the seemingly inoffensive Westerner, made sense as a successor. For one thing, as minority whip he was next in line. Plus, there was little risk he would overshadow any of the Democratic stars in the Senate, several of whom were angling for presidential runs in 2008. Reid swiftly became the consensus choice of the caucus and was elected leader with ease.



Reid with the media, a frequent target

Reid's experience as minority whip has proven helpful in solidifying his support as leader. "As the Democratic whip, I probably knew and understood the caucus better than anybody else," he wrote in his 2008 memoir, *The Good Fight*. Reid knows what makes each senator tick: their motivations and their weaknesses. And he's increasingly popular with both his 55-member caucus and the liberal base of the Democratic party. As that

caucus has grown more liberal, the supposedly "pro-gun, pro-life" Democrat from Nevada has moved left to match. Intensely and aggressively antiwar after 2004 (though he voted for going to war in Iraq), he has an enthusiastic following among some of the caucus's most left-wing members. Younger liberals—Jeff Merkley from Oregon, Mark Udall from Colorado, and Tom Udall from New Mexico—see Reid as their champion, particularly on revising the filibuster rules to deprive Republicans of a procedural tool that's useful to Senate minorities. And Reid is generous to those loyalists. Patty Murray of Washington, for instance, had a lackluster career after entering the Senate in 1993, but her devotion to Reid earned her a spot on the leadership team as conference secretary when Democrats took control in 2007, and Murray now serves as chair of the powerful budget committee.

Reid has maintained favor with the moderate wing, as well. Missouri's Claire McCaskill, not exactly a foot soldier for Reid, began last year in a difficult spot for reelection. Reid's political action committee, Majority PAC, spent more than a million dollars running ads in the Republican primary against her most formidable potential opponent, John Brunner. Brunner lost the primary to Todd Akin, who

within weeks would sink his campaign with his “legitimate rape” comments. Another red-state Democrat, Jon Tester of Montana, got help from Majority PAC, which ran \$3 million worth of ads against his Republican challenger. Reid also championed the Sportsmen’s Act, a bill supported by the National Rifle Association that would expand federal hunting and fishing land and was popular with Montanans. There was significant movement on the bill prior to Election Day, though it ground to a halt thereafter. No matter, since Tester won handily, and Reid retained another ally. Business as usual.

Reid’s rise to become one of the most powerful men in Washington may seem incredible, but he’s a natural fighter. He was born and raised in Searchlight, a tiny mining settlement in Nevada’s southern tip. His parents drank heavily, and his father would beat Reid, his brother, and their mother. At age 14, Reid and his younger brother Larry saw their father hit their mother and decided to do something about it. “We jumped him,” Reid wrote in 2008. “I took him high, Larry took him low, and we pinned him to the floor. He was like a rock.” Reid took up boxing in college “so that I could channel my brawling instincts into something more respectable.”

That taste for brawling has characterized Reid’s long career in Democratic politics since his first election, in 1968, to the Nevada state assembly. Gubernatorial candidate Mike O’Callaghan—also his high school teacher, boxing coach, and mentor—chose Reid to run on the ticket for lieutenant governor in 1970. Reid served nearly four years as lieutenant governor before losing two subsequent elections: one for Senate, to Republican Paul Laxalt, and another for Las Vegas mayor. But Reid made a name for himself as chairman of the Nevada Gaming Commission in the late 1970s. In 1978, a crooked businessman named Jack Gordon (who later married La Toya Jackson) tried to bribe Reid to approve licenses for two new types of casino game. After alerting the FBI, Reid set up a meeting in his office with Gordon and his business partner as a sting. When Gordon produced the money for the bribe, the federal agents burst into the office to make the arrest. Here’s how Reid described the episode in his book:

The agents rushed in, and then I lost my temper. How could they think they could do this to me? I was so angry that I went at Jack Gordon. “You son of a bitch, you tried to bribe me!” I lunged and got him in a choke hold. I was in a rage. The FBI agents had to pull me off of Gordon. And then it was over.

Reid would go on to serve two terms in the House of Representatives before winning the Senate race to succeed Laxalt, who retired in 1986. Since that campaign, he’s faced tough reelection fights in 1998 and 2010, only to prevail when many predicted he wouldn’t. Rivals underestimate his toughness at their peril.

“He can be uncommonly mean,” says a Senate colleague, and Republicans frequently get the Reid treatment. In 2008, he told the *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, “I can’t stand John McCain.” Last year, Reid claimed that an anonymous investor in Bain Capital had told him that Mitt Romney had not paid taxes in 10 years. “His poor father must be so embarrassed about his son,” Reid told the *Huffington Post*. A Mormon, Reid said Romney “sullied” the religion.

Even his ostensible allies aren’t spared Reid’s nastiness.

At a recent Capitol press conference with fellow Senate Democratic leaders, Reid joked about New York senator Chuck Schumer’s weight. Schumer was displaying a chart on a small piece of paper to the gathered members of the media. “I was told in second grade to hold it under your chin,” Schumer said.

“Chuck, you’re a lot older, though,” Reid broke in. “Which chin?”

In a December floor speech meant to honor retiring senator Kent Conrad, Reid went off script

with a long, rambling aside about the North Dakota Democrat’s lavish treatment of his dog. “He is renowned for his dog,” Reid said. “He loves that little dog named Dakota. It is a fluffy white dog, a bichon frise. Everywhere Kent goes, Dakota is with him. They love that dog like only people can love animals.” Reid said he used to question how people could spend money on pets until his own daughter spent money on a beloved cat.

“I don’t question it anymore,” Reid concluded. “If my daughter feels that strongly about a cat, I am going to stop criticizing people who spend money on animals.” Conrad, who is sensitive to cracks about his frou-frou dog, was reportedly embarrassed.

Reid’s rhetoric runs the gamut from petty to insulting. In late 2008, he praised the new Capitol Visitor Center at the building’s dedication. “In the summertime, because [of] the high humidity and how hot it gets here, you could literally smell the tourists coming into the Capitol,” he said. During his reelection in 2010, Reid told a group of Latino voters in Nevada, “I don’t know how anyone of Hispanic heritage could be a Republican.” In April 2007, he said publicly that the war in Iraq was “lost”—right as American

‘He can be uncommonly mean,’ says one senator, and Republicans frequently get the Reid treatment. In 2008, he told the *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, ‘I can’t stand John McCain.’

troops were implementing the counterinsurgency strategy that turned the tide. Reid has called his own staff “far too fat” and a member of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission a “first-class rat,” a “miserable liar,” a “shit stirrer,” and a “tool of the nuclear industry.”

Reid has referred to New York’s Kirsten Gillibrand as the “hottest” senator and to Delaware senator Chris Coons as his “pet.” He’s praised Nebraska Democrat Ben Nelson’s “mop of real hair.” “I mean, he has hair like a 15-year-old,” Reid said on the Senate floor. “So I have to acknowledge, I’m a little envious of his hair.” He lauded Barack Obama as a presidential candidate in 2008 because Obama is “light-skinned” and doesn’t speak in a “Negro dialect.” “Unless he wanted to have one,” Reid added, for good measure.

Conservatives may consider Reid a buffoon, but he’s been an indisputable success. His knowledge of Senate procedure and political savvy have allowed him to outmaneuver the Republican minority and block legislation from the GOP-controlled House of Representatives. Reid has led the charge to end the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. He helped pass one of the largest federal spending programs in history, the 2009 stimulus package. And under Reid’s leadership, Congress and the president have enacted

some of the most prized achievements on the Democratic agenda: Wall Street regulation; repeal of the military’s Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell policy; and Obamacare.

But at what cost? In his six years as Democratic majority leader, Reid has done more institutional damage to the Senate than any leader in history. Under his leadership, particularly in the last two years, the Senate has seen some of its most unproductive periods ever. Appropriations bills for national defense, agriculture, and transportation take months, instead of weeks, to pass—but at least they pass. Most legislation is issued directly from the majority leader or his surrogates instead of from the committees, where the parties have to deal with each other. The result has been two years of fruitless debate over partisan bills with little to show for it. The Senate hasn’t passed a budget—one of its most basic functions—since April 29, 2009. But it has been Reid’s abuse of power that has been the most destructive element of his tenure.

In a deliberative body like the Senate, each member has two basic rights: to debate and to amend legislation. Unlike the House, where the majority party controls the debate and the amendment process, individual senators, even those in the minority, have considerable power. In addition, there’s no requirement in the Senate that an amendment be

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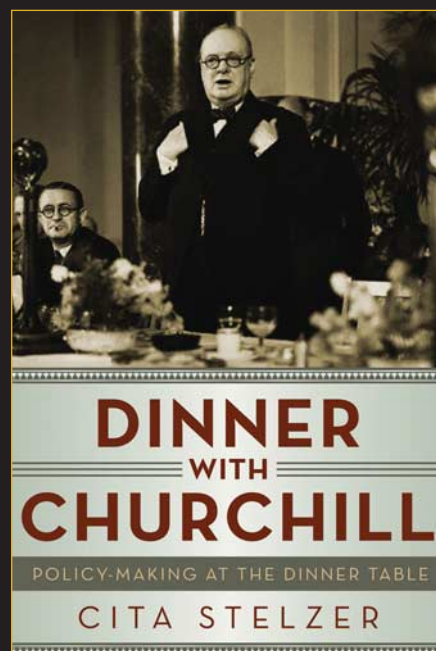
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germane to the bill to which it's attached (with some exceptions). In practice, this means minority senators can use the debate period to bring unrelated issues to the public square, and every senator has the opportunity to say his piece. In order to avoid the excessively long and unproductive debate known as a filibuster, Senate rules allow for the body to invoke cloture—a procedure to end debate on a pending bill or resolution so that the matter can be voted on.

Here's how the process would normally work. After debate on a legislative matter has been sufficiently conducted and members have had a reasonable period to file amendments, a senator (usually the majority leader) files a cloture motion, on which the Senate votes. With most matters, the motion needs 60 votes to pass. If cloture is invoked, the debate on the bill becomes restricted, and the Senate must vote on the matter within 30 legislative hours. If cloture is defeated, the bill has been effectively filibustered. Simple as that.

But under Reid's rule, the process is mucked up. Republican senators are often unable to offer amendments as a result of Reid's tactic of "filling the amendment tree." In order to block amendments from Republicans—many of which might force Democrats to take tough votes on controversial issues like guns and abortion—Reid files dummy amendments that fill the slate. Once cloture is invoked and no more amendments can be offered, Reid simply retracts his dummy amendments.

Reid will also file cloture on the same day debate on a bill begins—sometimes even before the first word of debate has been uttered. Same-day cloture filings had increased over the last decade, particularly under the leadership of Republican Bill Frist, but under Reid, the practice has exploded. Between 1993 and 2006, same-day cloture filings numbered 219; in the last six years, Reid and his surrogates have exceeded that number, filing same-day cloture motions 223 times. What's more, Reid identifies these preliminary cloture motions as Republican filibusters. By Reid's logic, he must preemptively invoke cloture in order to avoid the certainty of a filibuster from the Republicans.

The charge of a rump caucus of Republicans wantonly abusing the filibuster has been a useful cudgel for Reid, but all of this may soon change. Those newer liberals, particularly Merkley and the Udalls, have been pressuring Reid

to change the cloture rules to make it more difficult for the minority party to filibuster. To do so, Reid would likely have to impose the so-called nuclear option, changing the rules by way of a simple majority rather than the three-fifths majority usually required. It's something he's done before, though few noticed.

In October 2011, the Senate was debating a bill on currency exchange rates when Reid filed for cloture, which passed. Republicans, frustrated with Reid's blocking of amendments, moved seven times to suspend the rules to allow votes on their amendments (a practice not unheard of). Reid responded with a point of order, arguing the motions to suspend were dilatory and out of order. The presiding officer, at the recommendation of the parliamentarian,

ruled that the Republicans' motions were in order, so Reid, in an unprecedented move, appealed the chair's ruling. That meant Reid got a simple majority vote to overturn the ruling and change the Senate rules regarding motions to suspend. Republicans didn't press the point, but the precedent for Reid's unilaterally changing the Senate rules had been set.

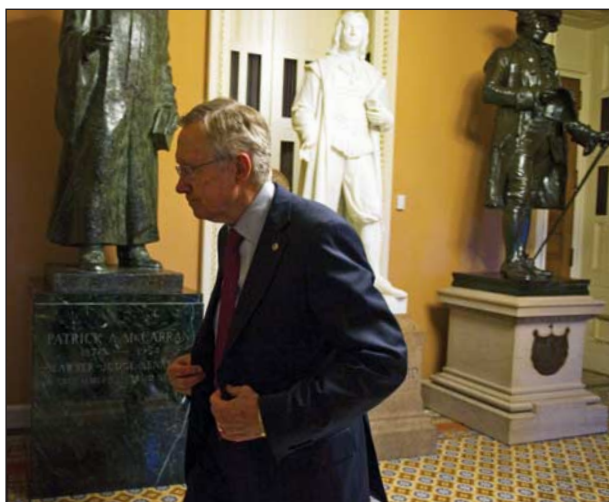
That's what Republicans and even some institutional Democrats fear will happen with Reid's promise to change the filibuster. Old

bulls like Carl Levin have expressed skepticism about the plan. As one Democratic senator wrote just five years ago, "If some [in the majority] had their way, and overruled the Senate parliamentarian, and the rules of the Senate were illegally changed so that the majority ruled tyrannically, then the Senate—billed to all as the world's greatest deliberative body—would cease to exist."

The man who wrote that warning was none other than Reid himself.

Inside the ornate corridors of the U.S. Capitol outside the Senate chamber, you can sense the presence of the legendary leaders who once conducted the business of republican government here. Names like Daniel Webster, Henry Clay, Robert Taft, and Lyndon Johnson come to mind. Their portraits and busts peer out from the walls, keeping watch over the latest generation of stewards of the American experiment. Statesmen, compromisers, tough negotiators, ideologues—these men left lasting marks on the Senate and American politics.

Harry Reid, it's safe to say, is not one of them.



The majority leader makes his way to the Senate floor.

The Moor Strategy

*Mauritania's President Mohamed Abdel Aziz
on Islamists and underdevelopment in the Sahel*

BY ROGER KAPLAN

Nouakchott, Mauritania

Of all the security threats Americans did not expect in 2013, a military breakthrough by Islamists into the heart of West Africa is the most urgent. At this writing, Malians are fleeing the Niger River hub of Mopti, and elements of a French airborne brigade are deployed nearby to reinforce Malian infantrymen, as Islamist fighters advance. Last month, the U.N. Security Council authorized the use of force to rescue northern Mali, which fell under the control of several al Qaeda affiliates in March 2012.

The French-sponsored plan, for which the United States has expressed lukewarm support, is being jump-started by the terrorists' preemptive use of force. They have had a year to strengthen their position. An individual with a keen interest in the alarming strategic situation is the Islamists' arch-foe and Mali's neighbor, Mohamed Abdel Aziz, president of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania. While acknowledging that the crisis calls for an immediate reaction on the part of Mali and its friends to keep the Islamists north of the Niger River, he stresses that there is no longer any excuse for not taking a hard look at the whole Sahel region and its persistent problems.

So little known is Mauritania that few Western news outlets bothered to report the wounding of its president last October. Victim of a reportedly accidental shooting while passing an army guard post on a desert road outside this capital, Abdel Aziz required surgery and weeks of convalescence in France, during which neither the White House nor the State Department called him directly. He does not bring this up during a conversation in his office at year's end, but goes straight to the point he wants to get across: The terrorist groups

and criminal gangs in northern Mali must be eradicated.

Having watched jihadists establish sanctuaries in the Sahara for over a decade, Abdel Aziz is wary of quick fixes. He fought them alone early last year, vainly urging his neighbors to join him in coordinated action at a time when, he still believes, the problem could have been dealt with by a terrible swift and well-aimed sword. "There were only a few hundred armed men back then," he says, adding, "Even during the Tuareg war, we could have intervened and solved the problem." Last year, a secessionist movement among Tuareg nomads routed the U.S.-trained Malian Army and was in turn chased out of the north by better-equipped jihadists who entered the fray.



Mohamed Abdel Aziz

In the first three months of 2012, the Mauritanian Army entered Mali on at least two occasions, using ground troops and airpower to dissuade the rebels from any idea of moving toward their frontier. This was in keeping with a policy adopted after Abdel Aziz came to power in 2008. Its main components include modernization of his forces and a willingness to engage in hot pursuit of the troublemakers by crossing the 500-mile border his country shares with Mali.

This earned Abdel Aziz a high place on the hit list of the Saharan branch of al Qaeda, Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM). It also got results. AQIM, which had viewed Mauritania as the weak link in its campaign to break into the Sahel and thence black Africa, no longer threatens this country. Abdel Aziz, with unspoken contempt, contrasts his policy with the passive attitude of his neighbor.

It is a position of no small importance to the United States, in a period of change of foreign policy leadership at home and Islamist ascendancy in North Africa. Last year saw the arrival of Islamist governments in Egypt, Tunisia, and Morocco. Islamists are a strong factor in Libya and contenders for power in Algeria, which awaits the ailing President Bouteflika's departure. And, with all due respect for the differences between Muslim Brotherhood-affiliated political parties and al Qaeda, the radicals conquered a Texas-sized territory north of the Niger River, 60 percent of Mali, and will be hard to dislodge.

"The previous Malian regime's mistake was to share

Roger Kaplan reported from Mali for THE WEEKLY STANDARD last year.

NEWS.COM

power with the terrorists and the criminal gangs. Doing so, Mali's government helped destabilize the region," asserts Abdel Aziz.

Abstrud though it seems in retrospect, Mali was until last year America's poster-country for liberal democracy in West Africa. Amadou Toumani Touré, known as "ATT," was planning to step down in April after reaching the constitutional limit of two terms as president. The campaign to succeed ATT had already begun when the latest avatar of the Azawad ("homeland," derived from the word for pastures in the Tuareg language) national movement overran garrisons of the Mali Defense Force in the north.

The gruesome massacre in late January 2012 of a unit that reportedly had laid down its arms should have alerted the once-popular president, who governed by consensus and accommodation, that he had to shift gears. Instead, ATT tried to appease the rebels, even as it became evident that the national movement, which openly proclaimed its secessionist aim, was being reinforced by AQIM and its affiliates. The northerners benefited from returning mercenaries who had served deposed Libyan strongman Muammar Qaddafi and who brought with them large surpluses from his upscale arsenal.

They also benefited, Abdel Aziz observes, from years of neglect of the north by the Malian government: "ATT's problem is that he did nothing to maintain security in the north or to encourage economic and social development. Rather, he had been sharing power with the terrorists all along."

"Abdel Aziz is too polite to say so," a Mauritanian journalist told me, "but he means not only that outside Timbuktu and other cities, the Malian government had little or no authority; ATT and his entourage were sharing in the ill-gotten gains of the gangs up there." Lawless activities included drug smuggling, gunrunning, and the lucrative kidnapping racket that financed the 2012 war, according to observers in Bamako, Mali's capital. One northern drug kingpin, detained by Malian authorities, was freed even as the fighting raged.

"We tried to warn him," Abdel Aziz says quietly. "We knew who the brokers were. We caught some of them."

"He means," my journalist source amplified, "there were guys up there—Mauritanians, Malians, Algerians—who set themselves up as go-betweens. ATT knew, and he almost surely profited in everything from the ransoms to the drug

money." This grave charge has not been proven in a court of law. But, according to sources in Mauritanian security, marked currency from Germany's central bank, used in one of the most notorious ransom payoffs, was later found in Paris. It was being used by ATT's entourage, including his wife, on a shopping spree.

By a bitter irony, northern Mali was seized by rebels practically under the noses of a U.S. military training mission that was based in Mopti, one of the Niger River towns near Timbuktu. The mission itself, part of a multiyear program under our Africa Command to train African militaries and improve the security of the sub-Saharan countries, went very well. Unfortunately, ATT was overthrown by angry soldiers less than a month after the Americans went home, causing the United States to suspend all but humanitarian aid. This left the Islamists to spend the next 10 months consolidating their position unimpeded, recruiting and training fighters from the terrorist internationale and equipping them with good weapons.

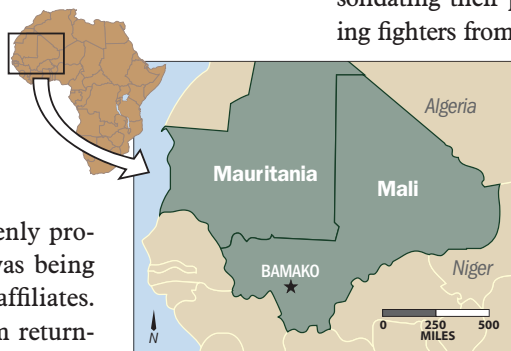
In Bamako the soldiers soon relinquished formal power to a transitional government, but they remain the rump country's power brokers. In December they replaced the prime minister without asking anyone's permission. With no money or Western aid, they could do nothing to reinforce their own defensive positions, a fact painfully demonstrated in the past week.

Abdel Aziz recites the unhappy recent history in a few terse sentences, speaking in a quiet voice that is just this side of impatient. He does not look like a man recovering from a bullet wound in the abdomen. At 56 he has the lean straight build of the professional soldier he was until he resigned his commission as a general officer (his country's first) in order to run for president in 2009.

The Mauritanian election that year required political and diplomatic finesse, because it was occasioned by the coup Abdel Aziz and his fellow generals organized against the sitting president in 2008. In support of an African Union rule against coups, the United States (and France, the former colonial power) several years ago adopted legislation that forbids top-level relations with (and most aid to) coup-born regimes.

The move against President Sidi Ould Cheik Abdalhahi was occasioned by security concerns. It was bloodless, and the ousted head of state eventually entered the transition process. Full diplomatic ties with the United States were restored after the 2009 election.

"So," I ask the president, "you have constitutional rule, if a little frayed, in both Mauritania, which repulsed AQIM, and Mali, which lost 60 percent of its country to the jihadists.



The Security Council gives you a green light. ECOWAS [the West African Union] pledges men, France and the United States pledge equipment and advisers. But you say no?"

"I don't say no. I say not now."

Abdel Aziz's position, overtaken by events, underscored the gaps in our own understanding of the Sahel's fragility. He knew very well the Malians were in no position to fight off a renewed onslaught by the highly motivated Islamists when the winter fighting season began. What he feared was that the Western powers, if they reacted, would throw the Islamists back into their desert sanctuaries and leave the region's problems unaddressed.

Only a few weeks earlier, Abdel Aziz lay on a bed in a French military hospital, thinking about the war plan the French wanted the Security Council to approve.

There had been a dramatic automobile race across the dunes, as the accidentally wounded Abdel Aziz piloted his own car—he had been on a private excursion—back toward a hospital in the capital. Reaching his military staff by phone, he ordered a quick deployment toward the desert check point from which the shots that hit him had been fired. Seizing the opportunity to demonstrate that his security policies were effective and that terrorists were not involved (as the first rumors had suggested), the president accepted a young lieutenant's apologies, though he adds laconically, "He is not fit for command." Significantly, neither AQIM nor any other armed group tried to gain publicity by claiming credit for the shooting.

While recovering in Paris, Abdel Aziz discussed the security situation with French officials and reiterated his view that it was better to wait than to go for half measures. He offered his own version of what used to be called hearts-and-minds.

"Since last April," Abdel Aziz explained, "when the rebels occupied all the north, they began terrorizing the population with the strictest application of *sharia* law, destroying ancient treasures of great cultural and historical significance, shooting couples for holding hands in public, and amputating the hands of bread thieves. They can be defeated, but if you go in with a massive assault," as has been proposed, "all you will do is unite the different factions and drive the captive people into their arms for protection. It is not only a handful of Westerners who are being held hostage in northern Mali, it is the whole north Malian population that the terrorists are holding hostage."

Meeting with Mali's prime minister in the first days of 2013, Abdel Aziz indicated Mauritania was prepared to help its neighbor, and he reiterated this when the fighting began last week. Reports from Bamako had French helicopter gunships engaging Islamist fighters north of Mopti on Friday; it may be possible to stabilize the front in the coming days or weeks. But the long-term need is for a pan-Sahel

strategy more consequential than the one that so dramatically failed last year. This includes taking the vexing issue of development in a very poor region seriously—something ATT never did, according to his neighbor. While Abdel Aziz insists on security as a government's first duty to its people, he sees development as a close second.

Mauritania enjoys not only a share in the current West African oil boom, but also significant deposits of gold, iron ore, copper, and phosphate, as well as uranium. "With security and stability," a business source notes, "our mining and petroleum sectors can turn us into the locomotive of the Sahel, a region that long has needed one. We are not only the 'safe port west of the Nile' of oil men's dreams, we are attractive to investors and a job magnet for our neighbors." This is confirmed by the presence of a large migrant labor force, notably in Mauritania's expanding construction industry.

Abdel Aziz does not view his role as vaunting his country's merits to investors, but he does insist that international contracts here are inviolable. "Despite having several regimes since independence, we always honored our contracts."

"Descendants of nomadic traders," another business source explains, "the Mauritians were the traditional commercial leaders throughout the Sahel and much of West Africa. They understand markets and trading."

Many years ago, John F. Kennedy, who had never heard of Mauritania notwithstanding his support, as a senator, for decolonization, met at the White House with the newly independent country's first president, Moktar Ould Daddah. Kennedy was impressed with the strategic location of Mauritania, straddling North Africa and black Africa. He said, according to Ould Daddah, they should stay in touch. That was in October 1963, the first and only conversation between American and Mauritanian presidents. A few weeks later, Kennedy flew to Dallas, and the day after that, Ould Daddah, as he recounts in his memoir, formally went into mourning. Ould Daddah's experiment in one-party rule ended badly, but he did name one of his capital's three paved streets John F. Kennedy Avenue.

It is, of course, easy to say we should pay more attention to this country or that, just as it is easy to say we should show concern when a head of state takes a bullet. So many countries, so little time. But there has been a bad streak lately in this part of the world. Islamist parties are in power or in positions of great influence all across the Maghreb, while the countries of the Sahel fear the presence of a terror state in their midst. They also worry about the consequences of a poorly conceived rescue. In these circumstances, it may be the better part of prudence to think our strategy through fully—and perhaps begin with a simple phone call. ♦



Kati Marton, Richard Holbrooke at the International Women's Health Coalition gala, 2005

The Women Who Wed

They're people, too, and often based in Paris. BY JUDY BACHRACH

I'm burning with envy.

Here I've been plugging away of late in places like Oklahoma City and Scottsdale. Meanwhile, both Susan Mary Alsop and Kati Marton, heroines of two ostensibly different books, had a much better idea. The only possible way to provoke interest in their surprisingly similar lives, they decided—separately, to be sure, and without communication—was to date-line a lot of events, however small or self-indulgent, “Paris,” throw in a few French phrases, perhaps the occasional reference to Ernest Hemingway, and then hope for the best. And, believe it or not, the best invariably showed up. Usually wearing trousers.

Judy Bachrach is a contributing editor to Vanity Fair.

Paris

A Love Story

by Kati Marton

Simon & Schuster, 208 pp., \$24

American Lady

The Life of Susan Mary Alsop

by Caroline de Margerie

Viking, 256 pp., \$26.95

Toujours.

Boutiques, lovers, spouses, celebrity friends with and without accents, baguettes, and bistros—they all settle in, tiny pavé diamonds you might say, encircling two American Alma Mahlers who collect men for all sorts of reasons, including love.

Marton's is actually an autobiograph-

ical, theoretically contemporary work that encompasses three husbands—the last two of whom are famous and peripatetic—and is titled (perhaps inevitably) *Paris: A Love Story*. On the other hand, Susan Mary Alsop's life, made slightly less entrancing by both a lower number and caliber of husbands (just two, and only one, a bellicose newspaper columnist, famous during the sixties), is contained within the covers of something called *American Lady*, and it isn't written by her, at least not wholly. As she died in 2004 at age 86, the saga of her long life and the recordings of her silly pronouncements regarding those world events she either witnessed or did not, are largely the result of author Caroline de Margerie's frantic industry: i.e., reading many of her subject's

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letters, and then quoting from them.

Here, for instance, is Alsop's reaction to the tragic events that prevented her from visiting Cambodia in 1970 (when, as she knew, the United States was about to send troops there): "*Tant pis*, I'm off to Northern Thailand, said to be very pretty." And here is Kati Marton's sartorial take on her third husband, Richard Holbrooke, our late representative to Pakistan and Afghanistan, and the successor in Marton's life to her second husband, the late ABC News reader Peter Jennings:

As the freshly minted Mrs. Richard C. Holbrooke, I was about to have an eye-opening experience. Richard and I arrived at the Hotel l'Abbaye de Talloires in Annecy in the French Alps, for our honeymoon. As my first wifely gesture I unzipped his suitcase. To my horror, his honeymoon kit contained two suits, one black and one pinstriped, several white shirts, and some funeral ties and a pair of sinister-looking black brogues. "Did you pack for a conference or for your honeymoon?" I asked. "Gordon must have forgotten where I was going," he answered, blaming his butler at the Berlin Embassy. "Gordon!" I exploded.

Isn't there something at once striking and a bit perverse in the publishers and authors of today, with their fondness for packing so much Marie Antoinette into such slender volumes?

There was a time, after all, when American ladies went around quoting Gloria Steinem: "We are becoming the men we wanted to marry." Then, realizing that wasn't perhaps such a terrific ambition, they modified both their yearnings and, with luck, their earnings. They became, for better or for worse, the women men were, after a few years of domesticity, retrospectively amazed they had married—something apart and distinct from their husbands.

But Madame Marton and Madame Alsop (or at least de Margerie's depiction of Madame Alsop, which I'm mournfully certain is accurate) became the women men *were desperate* to marry. All men of all types. Even Joseph Alsop, a hardliner who happened to be a homosexual, begged ("as humble

as a church pastor requesting a small donation to repair the church roof, who wrings his hands in anguish," in the biographer's unhappy phrase) for the dainty hand of Susan Mary—and Susan Mary, let us be blunt, did little in life besides wed, take impressive lovers, play hostess, and write letters. Kati Marton, who wed impressive men, took lovers, played hostess, and wrote letters and books, got the same kind of adulation. More, even.

You can mock these women, you can dismiss them; but here's what you can learn from them.

First Lesson: *Sweat the small stuff.*

Current spouse a blustering, bullying fool who finds you repulsive in bed and insults your important guests? Focus on the bright side: "Her chaste companionship with Joe did not bother her," we learn about Susan Mary's early years with Joe Alsop. "[I]t was compensated by privileges like regularly playing hostess to a brilliant cast of characters such as Ted Heath, I.M. Pei, Zbigniew Brzezinski, Moshe Dayan, and George Cukor." Also, Susan Mary was equally fond of attending. For example, she did make it "to New York to attend the dinner given by Marietta [Tree] before Truman Capote's Black and White Ball." (An aside: This carries, although the biographer doesn't appear to know it, about the same social cachet as making it to a cocktail party *before* the Academy Awards.)

So what are we to make of all this easy surrender, the dismal compensations of chatting with Ted Heath or George Cukor? Her biographer has the answer: "Susan Mary came from a generation whose intelligent women gracefully accepted their place as satellites orbiting masculine suns." (So did stupid women, however, and with at least as much grace.)

But—and here's the interesting part—orbiter-in-chief Kati Marton also accepts her place, her satellite rotations. And she was born three decades after Susan Mary Alsop. In 1979, Peter Jennings, then London-based, only had to whistle for Marton to relinquish the ABC Bonn bureau in order to embrace marriage and motherhood.

It was clear to me that I could not combine life as Peter's wife, the mother of his child, with the life of a full-time foreign correspondent. I threw myself . . . into my new domestic role with the same zeal with which I once attacked unmasking corruption in Philadelphia and spy stories in Germany.

In fact, she continues, "The very qualities that my family and friends encouraged—my irreverence and my drive—through Peter's eyes became liabilities. 'Glib,' he called me, and 'ambitious.' I vowed to change—to transform myself into a London 'mum,' content to push . . . prams in Holland Park and Hampstead Heath."

Similar to Alsop however, bold-type name compensations soon came her way. And not just with Jennings, under whose roof (as Marton takes care to inform us) Pamela Harriman took shelter. While second husband Holbrooke lay fighting for his life during 21 hours of heart surgery, everyone who was anyone phoned Marton, as she recounts very early on—in chapter two, in fact: Afghanistan's Hamid Karzai; Pakistani president Asif Zardari ("Kati! I told Richard he was overdoing it! He must take it easy!"); President Barack Obama ("Michelle and I are praying for you both"). So much so that, when her cell phone rang yet again, and someone on the other end said, "Hello, Kati, this is Farzad Najam," Holbrooke's wife responded, "Oh hello. Which paper are you with?"

It turned out to be the surgeon, with bad news.

Second Lesson: Famous husbands mean famous guests. Invite Sarah Jessica Parker with George Soros, or Whoopi and Barbara, or Robert Schuman and Pamela Harriman.

Richard always insisted that I give the welcoming toast, which he maintained I did better than he. I approached this task with some seriousness and tried to be both witty and topical. Barbara Walters . . . was a regular at our parties. After a dinner honoring First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton, Barbara wrote, "What a special night, Kati! Your toast was very touching. I bathe in your happiness and success."

Similarly, Alsop never missed an opportunity to bathe with celebrities. Yes, France was falling into crisis: Three million workers went on strike because of rising prices and falling wages, and telegraph lines were cut. So imagine Alsop's relief when the strikes ended, the telegrams resumed, and she was free once again to socialize with Nancy Mitford, Odette Pol-Roger, René Mayer, and Winston Churchill. Moreover, the defeat of the underpaid workers had another upside: "It meant the Coopers' farewell ball could take place," her biographer blandly recounts. (Duff Cooper, aside from being Britain's ambassador to France, also happened to be Alsop's lover, so you can understand her degree of concern.)

Although the perverse Marietta Tree "did not think it fitting to dance while Paris burned," Alsop found the resulting illumination so flattering to her "mauve satin and ivory grosgrain creation that Elsa Schiaparelli had insisted on making" that she danced at the British embassy until five in the morning.

Third Lesson: Le Chic is very important, and sometimes it's free.

"Shopping in Paris is one of our rituals," Kati Marton points out in her first chapter, and by "our" she includes Holbrooke, which is kind of interesting. But she doesn't dwell on him long: "In a chic Right Bank boutique I parade several beautiful suits and dresses. Richard looks up at the phone and nods at the velvet suit I am modeling."

"*C'est aubergine, monsieur*," the saleslady interjects, describing the unfortunate color.

And here is Susan Mary Alsop's fashion take on postwar France, after the fall of Vichy and the rise of French communism: "She greeted the December 1945 devaluation of the franc with glee because it meant she could finally afford a dress in one of Paris's coveted but expensive boutiques," writes her biographer. "She wore New Look gowns that Christian Dior lent and even gave her because they flattered her slender waist and handsome bust. 'Madame, it does me good to see so much *joie de vivre*,' the

maître d'hôtel at Maxim's exclaimed one evening after she had stumbled and fallen into his arms."

Fourth Lesson: Always choose your amours from your circle of amis.

For example, not only was Ambassador Duff a dear friend of Alsop's, but so also was Duff's wife, Diana. All of this coziness, far from making Alsop miserable or conflicted, simply added to her personal happiness. In a similar mode, barely had Marton decided to divorce Jennings



Susan Mary Alsop, 1975

(they were at yet another party, and, in answer to Marton's "Shall we go, sweetheart?" Jennings tossed the keys at her, snapping, "You can go if you want"—which turned out to be, as Marton might well say, the *coup de grâce*), than Richard Holbrooke, a longtime friend and, at the time, our ambassador to Germany, came knocking, quite literally, at her door. At the Hôtel Petit Trianon in Versailles, since you asked.

For many women, as I can personally attest, a breakup can mean centuries and centuries of social aridity. For Kati Marton, it was more like 24 hours. On Christmas Day, Jennings arrived in Paris, begging Marton to overlook the key-tossing and return to him. On December 26, "an armored Buick, the size of a small tank, the official car of the American ambassador to Germany," rolled up, its occupant informing her that he "had been anticipating my

separation for years." And not only that: "He had known for years I was just right for him intellectually and emotionally, and in other ways too." In fact, Ambassador Holbrooke "proceeded to list about a decade of sightings of me at parties, meetings, even in elevators."

Then he whisked her off to the châteaux of the Loire, Tours, and finally "the gabled rooms" of the Pavillon de la Reine on Place des Vosges. Their last night, they dined at Benoit, and whom do they see but Pamela Harri-man, once Marton's overnight guest. "The next day Pam put out word that Holbrooke was seen dining in Paris with a mysterious Swedish journalist," Marton writes, and beneath all that print you can practically touch the bulge of pique. "Not worth the trouble learning her name, she told a mutual friend of ours."

Fifth Lesson: Never take a lover without leaving a big clue.

Alsop's big clue happened to be her first child—a son she named after her husband but who bore, in his youth at least, a strong resemblance to Ambassador Duff Cooper. ("Oh yes, of course, and he's your father," she informed the poor guy in an off-handed manner nine years before her death—this during a family therapy session in a residence where she was being treated for alcohol abuse. Her son burst into tears.) Marton, being of another generation, offered clues even more pronounced. She *told* two husbands, Jennings and Holbrooke both, that she had taken a lover, a different one in each instance, and was forgiven by both men on the spot.

Personally, I'm longing for the merest hint of her explanations for these lapses—how she recounted, how she explained, defended, and then induced instant pardons—but explanations are the one thing Marton seems to leave out. It's very unfair.

"Richard was my best friend and I could not keep anything from him long," she writes about the second occasion. "He had given me such confidence, such unlimited support, how could I keep our first crisis from him?"

Beats me.

◆ THE WASHINGTON POST / GETTY IMAGES

The Price Was High

Affirmative action and the betrayal of a colorblind society. BY **GEORGE LEEF**

Almost no one understood it at the time, but Lyndon Johnson's speech at Howard University in June 1965 marked a disastrous change in civil rights policy. Previously, the civil rights movement had sought to overturn the entrenched, often legally mandated discrimination that was the legacy of Jim Crow, and bring about the colorblind society in which people would be judged (as Martin Luther King put it) by the content of their character rather than the color of their skin.

Johnson, however, argued in favor of using government power to make the races equal, thereby opening up an entirely different view of what it meant to advocate civil rights: namely, preferences in favor of people who happened to come from certain minority groups. The spirit of this new approach to civil rights was captured in an unguarded comment Justice Thurgood Marshall allegedly made during the debate over the *DeFunis* case in 1974: "You guys have been practicing discrimination for years. Now it is our turn."

Even though advocates of civil rights continued to pay lip service to the ideal of a colorblind society, many saw that they would benefit from shifting to demands for "affirmative action." They began to insist on quotas for minority admissions to elite colleges and universities, workforces at companies and government agencies, and recipients of government contracts. Today, obligations to satisfy racial quotas (even though they cannot be called such) are very nearly ubiquitous in America.

This deep and measured book offers

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Wounds That Will Not Heal

Affirmative Action and Our Continuing Racial Divide

by Russell K. Nieli
Encounter, 456 pp., \$29.95

an overwhelming argument against the notion that we need the "good" racial preferences of affirmative action to overcome the undoubtedly bad effects of the old regime. Russell Nieli contends that the only thing affirmative action has accomplished is turning the country into "a confederation of contending tribes" where ancestry trumps individual merit.

Nieli, who teaches politics at Princeton, shows that our system of racial preference is a fatally flawed and counterproductive attempt to right old wrongs. Instead of healing the wounds of slavery and Jim Crow, it keeps them sore and festering. It encourages beneficiaries to rely on ethnicity rather than self-improvement to get ahead. And it tells Americans who are *not* part of a favored group to accept unfair treatment meekly, in the name of social justice.

One of Nieli's principal arguments is that affirmative action has become a crutch which harms those it is supposed to help.

Racial preference policies have lulled substantial segments of the black middle class into complacency and half-hearted performance in our increasingly education-focused world.

He supports his case by citing the research of the late Berkeley sociologist John Ogbu, whose study of black high school students in the wealthy Cleveland suburb of Shaker Heights revealed the malign influence of racial

preferences. Ogbu found that those students, while suffering none of the handicaps of being "disadvantaged," nevertheless performed poorly in school. The reason? They knew that, with the wind of affirmative action at their backs, mediocre work was good enough.

This mindset carries over into college. As Nieli points out, nearly all of our top schools bend over backwards to create a "diverse" student body: They admit applicants who have (or claim to have) "minority status" even when their academic profiles are significantly weaker than those of white and Asian students who must be rejected to make room. Once in college, many of those admitted to make the diversity numbers look good continue to coast, often gravitating toward soft academic departments where grades are high but little or nothing of value is learned.

Nieli also adduces strong evidence for the "mismatch" argument: that admitting academically weaker students hurts them because they'll be at a competitive disadvantage compared with their classmates, especially in disciplines in which knowledge is cumulative. We would have more minority mathematicians and scientists if it weren't for affirmative action mismatching students with universities that are too demanding for them.

Zealots who insist that racial preferences must be maintained avoid this argument, usually by changing the subject to the claimed benefits that white and Asian students derive from "diversity" on campus. This was the keystone in Justice Sandra Day O'Connor's majority opinion in the *Grutter* case (2003): She was content to take the University of Michigan's word that great benefits flow from having a diverse student body.

Nieli shows how feeble and deceptive this argument is. It's nothing but wishful thinking to believe that engineering diverse student bodies leads to cross-cultural understanding. Almost all of the minority students admitted will be culturally indistinguishable from their white classmates: They're all American teenagers who have grown up with largely the same influences.

Moreover, the actual experience of “diversity” is far from ideal: Thanks to the obsession with race, we find lots of self-segregation and resentment.

When the Supreme Court last considered this question, the majority was pleased to defer to the supposed expertise of the University of Michigan rather than undertake a careful examination—in legal parlance, strict scrutiny—of the pros and cons of choosing students based on race.

If the Court gives affirmative action real scrutiny in the recently argued *Fisher v. Texas*, even the liberal justices will have a hard time ruling that the robotic pursuit of racial diversity is a “compelling state interest.” Affirmative action is yet another of those social programs that make leftist politicians and academics feel good about themselves, while harming the imagined beneficiaries and tearing our social fabric. ♦

BCA

Chicanery Row

Even John Steinbeck’s ‘nonfiction’ was fictional.

BY SHAWN MACOMBER



John Steinbeck and Charley, 1962

In 1956, the celebrated novelist John Steinbeck declared journalism to be “the mother of literature and the perpetrator of crap.” To the non-Nobel ear, this might sound like denigration or enmity. But Bill Steigerwald’s idol-slaying travelogue of truth suggests the bon mot may have been more aspirational than previously believed.

Shawn Macomber is a writer in Philadelphia.

Dogging Steinbeck

How I Went in Search of John Steinbeck’s America, Found My Own America, and Exposed the Truth About ‘Travels With Charley’
by Bill Steigerwald
CreateSpace, 280 pp., \$12.99

First, a bit of background. After 30 years toiling in journalism, Steigerwald accepted a buyout package from the

Pittsburgh Tribune-Review in 2009—or, as he puts it, “I dove from the deck of the Daily Titanic and swam off to look for books to write till I die.” For his first pre-mortem project Steigerwald decided to retrace the route John Steinbeck traveled for his 1962 best-seller *Travels with Charley*, minus the half-Wellington rubber boots, blue serge British naval hat, and standard French poodle. Though an ardent libertarian such as Steigerwald would typically look askance at the faux proletarian musings of a wealthy, New Deal-worshipping friend of Adlai Stevenson, it is easy to see why Steigerwald presumed an exploration of how the country had changed “since Ike was president, Elvis was king and everything worth buying was still Made in America and sold at Sears” would prove neither “complicated [n]or controversial.”

Alas, during his newspaper days, Steigerwald developed a nasty research habit, which he continued to indulge after his liberation from the dread deadline. Thus did he visit the Pierpont Morgan Library in New York to compare the original handwritten *Travels with Charley* manuscript with the edition sold in stores, and discovered that the *Charley* edit encompassed more than misplaced semicolons and who/whom usage.

“A writer must rearrange reality so it will seem reasonably real to the reader,” Steinbeck writes in the manuscript. Accordingly, it turns out, Steinbeck had not always been where he said he had gone, he likely invented many of *Charley*’s conveniently archetypal characters, and he serially exaggerated the Spartan nature of the trip—unless one considers Adlai Stevenson’s country estate and the Fatty Arbuckle suite at the St. Francis Hotel in San Francisco to be austere lodgings.

Most galling, the foundational conceit of the book—man and dog on a lonely quest “in search of America”—is utter deception: Steinbeck’s wife Elaine rode along for a goodly portion of the trip, costarring in the first draft until a Viking editor chose to play angel Clarence to Elaine’s George

BETTMANN / CORBIS / AP IMAGES

Bailey, giving readers the great gift of a chance to see how the book would appear without her—*much better*, apparently, came the answer from on high—and consequently (and, no doubt, from the dog's view, belatedly) promoting the frequently kenneled poodle to a perch on the front seat.

Perhaps when Steinbeck got his Nobel Prize his editor got her wings; but out on the cold trail, hardscrabble romantic mythology provided Steigerwald with little warmth:

As I crossed into Washington I wasn't too happy with my man Steinbeck. His creative nonfictions in *Charley* had caused me to go driving in circles and knocking on people's doors in an under-populated, over-armed part of the country I'd never been to before and would never see again. Thank God the natives were friendly.

Apart from some surprised indignation at the brazenness of Steinbeck's fabulism, this friendliness is the primary motif of *Dogging Steinbeck*, offering a corrective to the original sin by beautifully detailing Steigerwald's own journey hopscotching across a nation which "despite the Great Recession and national headlines dripping with gloom and doom" remained "a big, beautiful, empty, healthy, rich, safe, clean, prosperous, and friendly country."

In the aftermath of his preliminary debunking (first revealed in an excellent 2011 *Reason* article), Steigerwald finds some unexpected sources and allies: *Helter Skelter* coauthor Curt Gentry, Paul Theroux, and the *New York Times* editorial board rallying alongside more predictable supporters. But, overall, the rationalizations of what Steigerwald dubs the "Steinbeck Studies Industrial Complex" are disheartening. Biographer Jay Parini defiantly tells the *Times*, "I would say hooray for Steinbeck. If you want to get at the spirit of something, sometimes it's important to use the techniques of a fiction writer." Of course, one need not possess Steinbeck's imagination to envision instances where Jay Parini might be less enthusiastic about greater truth through

fabrication: For example, if such "techniques" were employed in a book for which Parini had not written the Penguin Classics introduction.

"Scholars who liked Steinbeck apparently were too busy looking for deeper meaning in the conversations with a French poodle or a prescient environmentalist" to wrangle with

basic questions of veracity, Steigerwald writes. "If they had been more critical, more skeptical, more scholarly, they might have saved me a lot of work."

True enough. But then again, as *Dogging Steinbeck* ably proves, the longer the Golden Calf has to fatten, the sweeter the feast after the slaughter. ♦



Future Imperfect

Science fiction as guide to the stages of life.

BY ANN MARLOWE

Writing at age 35, on the cusp between youth and the rest of life, I wanted to know what

to do about being a rock critic when I was no longer young. (Easy—quit.) Now, 20 years later, and on the verge of leaving middle age, I look to science fiction to help me master the imaginable sting of death: not knowing what is going to happen in the world once we are gone. Though not all science fiction is set in the future, it's the only genre that can be used to extend the emotional resonance of memory to the future. And so it is a natural fit for those no longer young.

This runs in the face of the casual understanding of the genre. Teenagers used to be assumed to be the primary audience for sci-fi, maybe for the reasons I advanced in 1993: They have few memories, so the line between past and future is blurrier for them. But though I cannot quantify my guess, many of the sci-fi novels published in

the last decade seem so sophisticated, so complex and long, that it's hard to imagine a very young person reading them. Yet even as far back as Arthur C. Clarke and Philip K. Dick—whom

most people will know through the films of their works, 2001: *A Space Odyssey* and *Blade Runner*—sci-fi novels have been obsessed with time and mortality. These are concerns much closer to the heart of the middle-aged and old than the young.

Consider some common themes: human beings setting off on multigenerational space voyages which the orig-

inal travelers won't live to complete; peoples' memories being uploaded to a machine or a new body; the life-extending effects of traveling past the speed of light. Joe Haldeman's *The Forever War* (1974), which has become iconic among the American military, is probably the best-known example of that last theme. It deals with life and death in interstellar warfare, with the additional complication that the fighters age just a few years for every hundred or so that occur in the society they are defending on Earth. Haldeman's reflections on aging are more

2312

by Kim Stanley Robinson
Orbit, 576 pp., \$25.99

Embassytown

by China Miéville
Del Rey, 368 pp., \$16

The Quantum Thief

by Hannu Rajaniemi
Tor, 336 pp., \$24.99

Ann Marlowe, a writer in New York, is the author, most recently, of *David Galula: His Life and Intellectual Context*.

interesting than his futuristic combat scenes. (One wonderful motif is that the new young recruits for the endless war, born 500 or 1,000 years in the future, have to be taught 20th-century English in order to communicate with their commanders.)

Another great sci-fi trope—other worlds—has something to do with death as well. Sure, it's natural to be fascinated with the idea of life in other worlds; but these counterlives can also be seen as standing in for an afterlife—or afterlives—few of us now believe in, or are able to picture. It is no stranger to be curious about living in the future than about living in the past, but for a combination of reasons, historical novels have enjoyed much more respectability than science fiction. If they are set in the recent past, such as Leo Tolstoy writing in 1869 of 1805 in *War and Peace*, historical novels aren't even tainted by the genre label; but even books set in Tudor England get treated with more respect than books set 500 years in the future! One reason, no doubt, is that we know what happened 500 years ago, while anything about the future is pure speculation.

Another reason, perhaps, is that sci-fi has a deserved reputation for emotional shallowness, for focusing on gadgets at the expense of psychological depth. It's true that even the best of sci-fi tends to lack emotional nuance: I have yet to find a Marcel Proust or Jane Austen, a Charles Dickens or Virginia Woolf writing about the future. This is probably because of an unconscious assumption in the genre that the reader provides some of the emotional urgency: We each have a keen interest in our mortality. But the three books reviewed here have characters as live and real as those of Anthony Trollope or Edith Wharton, if not as vivid as those of masters of the first rank. And there's no reason to be embarrassed to read these authors: China Miéville, a 40-year-old Briton, has a doctorate in international relations from the London School of Economics and has stood for Parliament; Kim Stanley Robinson's Ph.D. is in English literature; the Finnish Hannu Rajaniemi is a 34-year-old string theorist who has also

set up a consulting firm in Scotland, where he lives.

Reading *2312*, *Embassytown*, and *The Quantum Thief* one after the other would be particularly interesting, since they offer some degree of consensus as to what the future will look like. All anticipate human beings living off Earth, with Machiavellian power politics played out across the solar system, bisexual and hermaphroditic norms, and extended human lifespans and other advances that lessen the sting of death. Each has a thought-provoking vision of a future society, and each has a startling take on time and/or mortality.

2312, Kim Stanley Robinson's imagining of a fully inhabited solar system and dying Earth, seems fresh and vital. In this future, humans routinely live to be nearly 200, and those who have chosen to be "smalls" (under a meter high) have never known a natural death. The main character is an immature 135-year-old performance artist, Swan Er Hong. Surgical and chemical augmentations are common in *2312*, but Swan has had what even her contemporaries feel is a shocking number of bodily and brain modifications, including taking DNA that gives her the ability to chirp like a bird and purr like a cat, and ingesting the only alien life found in the solar system. She is also a hermaphrodite, who has both given birth and impregnated a lover.

Robinson, who has published more than a dozen well-regarded sci-fi novels, many with environmental themes, relishes his many descriptions of the artificially terraformed asteroids that house people in this future world and serve as a means of traveling around the solar system. They are fascinating. So is the description of Hong's home planet, a terraformed Mercury, known for its artistic communities, which have made "goldsworthies" and "abramovics" in its striking, dangerous landscape. Like many locals, Swan enjoys "sunwalking" on the dark side of Mercury, keeping just ahead of the dawn's deadly heat.

China Miéville's *Embassytown* imagines a colony of humans at one of the ends of the universe, set up to interact

with a planet of aliens whose language remains stubbornly inaccessible to humans. I loved the playful treatment of the idea of the indeterminacy of translation, and the way the aliens are called Hosts—just as Afghanistan is called the "host nation" for our armed forces, with a similar absence of irony. The heroine, a space pilot named Avice Benner Cho, was a "simile" in her childhood, a resident of *Embassytown* honored by being asked by the Hosts to act out what will become a part of their language. (Hosts have no understanding of metaphor and are unable to lie.) To express the idea of being "as happy as a pig in mud" they would have to put a pig in mud and watch what happens. And humans call their speech "Language" with a capital "L."

The Quantum Thief by Hannu Rajaniemi is a thriller set on a far-future Mars, in a solar system caught up in complicated political maneuvering. The residents have near-immortality, but the catch is that not all of their life is spent being human. Everyone is born with an allotment of Time, which they spend for whatever consumer goods they like. They live longer when living frugally. When a local's Time runs out, his personality is uploaded into a nonhuman worker body, a Quiet, which does repetitive physical work on behalf of the colony until it's time to get a human body again.

The hero, Jean, a master thief, has amnesia when we meet him in prison. His feisty love interest, Mieli, from a radically different culture at the other end of the solar system, rescues him to stage a heist. Things get complicated as Jean and Mieli become entangled in an almost-love triangle with Mieli's spaceship, *Perhonen*, an artificial intelligence with a personality. Another interesting facet of this far-future Mars is that all information is uploaded into the equivalent of a cloud, called the exomemory, but everyone has adjustable personal privacy shields. You choose who can see you in public, and how much. You can appear as a blur, if you want. Two roommates can live in the same apartment, while keeping their privacy screens on, and each can feel himself alone. ♦

Treehouse Days

Before Tina Brown, there were problems at 'Newsweek.' BY NAOMI DECTER



Lawsuit press conference, March 16, 1970

Once upon a time, not so very long ago in the 1960s and early 1970s, the late newsmagazine *Newsweek* was a different, not-so-nice place, and Lynn Povich and 45 other “good girls” who worked there had no choice but to sue to make it (or at least their careers) better. So they did—twice. And they prevailed.

Now, you might be wondering why such good girls weren’t at home, barefoot and pregnant, cooking up some tasty morsels and getting ready to hand martinis to their post-work/pre-dinner husbands, instead of spending long nights at *Newsweek*, smoking, drinking, taking the Lord’s name in vain, and having a lot of premarital and extramarital sex. Well, you see, these weren’t just any good girls; these were the good girls of Vassar, Smith, Wellesley, Barnard, and Radcliffe. And

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The Good Girls Revolt
How the Women of Newsweek Sued Their Bosses and Changed the Workplace
 by Lynn Povich
 PublicAffairs, 288 pp., \$25.99

they had better things to do with their time than changing diapers and clipping recipes from *Family Circle*.

But it turned out that the magazine they’d set their well-educated hearts on working for relegated them to the career equivalent: the secretarial pool and/or the research desk. The girls chafed and griped, but their complaints were met with what can only be described as puzzled dismissiveness. (Even the big boss, Katharine Graham—herself a woman!—was less than helpful.) It was just a longstanding tradition at *Newsweek* that its writers were men, and only men.

This highly unsatisfactory situation came to a head in 1970, when women’s lib was getting to be all the rage—which meant, inevitably, a *Newsweek* cover story. Obviously, it would have

been, well, weird to have a man writing *the* story about the liberation of women from the shackles of patriarchal paternalism. But thanks to that unfortunate men-only tradition, no woman at the magazine was in a position to write it. So the patriarchs turned to an *outside* woman, Helen Dudar, who wrote for the *Daily News*, the *New York Post*, and the *New York Times*—and who just happened to be the (ahem) wife of *Newsweek* writer Peter Goldman.

Last straw for the good girls. They had nothing against Ms. Dudar, but the time had clearly come for some serious badness. Of course, they were simply terrified that they’d get into trouble for being bad, so they confabbed on the sly for months in the office ladies’ room and the apartments of various co-conspirators, including the Upper West Side flat of their attorney, Eleanor Holmes Norton.

They filed their EEOC complaint—and held a press conference announcing it—the day the cover story came out. When the resulting settlement talks dragged on for a year with no real results, they sued again (minus the press conference). This time, the patriarchs really, truly saw the error of their ways: Training programs were instituted, promotions were made, and the good girls triumphed.

The rest is her-story.

Or so you might have thought. Because, guess what? It’s 40 years later and *Newsweek* girls are *still* not living happily ever after, especially now that *Newsweek* no longer exists in print form. Sure, they’re writers, editors, even senior editors. But something just isn’t right. Today’s *Newsweek* girls are puzzled: They feel that boys are unfairly getting faster promotions and better assignments at the magazine; boys are riding roughshod over girls, high-fiving in the office and putting ESPN on the TV; boys are harassing girls by telling them they’re pretty and asking for advice about lunch preparation.

The girls are struggling. And this has never happened to them before. They’ve always gotten what they wanted and succeeded at everything—

from high school to college to graduate school. But now they're beginning to think something must be wrong with *them*. Until, that is, they stumble upon the good girls' olden-days lawsuit—along with a dog-eared copy of

Susan Brownmiller's *In Our Time: Memoir of a Revolution*.

Suddenly, everything is illuminated. It's not the girls' fault; it's that pesky old patriarchy! *Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose*. ♦



Meaning What?

Strunk and White for the postliterate set.

BY JIM SWIFT

As someone new to journalism, I've acquired every book imaginable on style, grammar, and writing. On my shelf sit *Words into Type*, *The Associated Press Stylebook*, *The New York Times Manual of Style and Usage*. Even dusty old books I was forced to buy in college—like *The Chicago Guide to Writing About Multivariate Analysis* and Strunk and White's *Elements of Style*—made the cut.

Of course, I haven't actually read them, but I tell everyone that I plan to do so. They look good on my bookshelf and, more important, they make me look smart.

I mean to read them, really, but just haven't found the time. That is, until I discovered this astonishing volume—a seminal work that no journalist has ever mentioned to me (not even my mom). If you want inspiration that will compel you to read the general rules for division of words, this is the book for you.

Early into *The Elements of F*cking Style*, I learned about my overreliance on parenthetical expressions between commas. Before reading this, I could tell you I knew what a parenthetical was, but couldn't pick one out of a paragraph if you asked me to. Now I can spot them, and I know their stylistic importance, with the aid of helpful anecdotes. For example:

Jim Swift is an editorial assistant at THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

The Elements of F*cking Style

A Helpful Parody

by Chris Baker and Jacob Hansen

St. Martin's Griffin, 96 pp., \$9.99

Now it is important to realize that if you're going to use commas in this way, they have to come in pairs. The pair of commas is like deciding whether to wear a tie to a meeting—if you go with the tie, you have to wear a jacket as well or you'll look like a tool. Same goes with commas.

In my daily duties here at THE WEEKLY STANDARD I most certainly do not want to “look like a tool.” Now I can use fancy terms such as “nonrestrictive clause” when opining about an author's attempt to defeat James Joyce for the distinction of writing the longest sentence in the English language.

To be sure, this is not a book for readers who might have an aversion to foul language or references to drugs and sex. Its 96 pages are replete with hilarious references, but don't let that discourage you—Chris Baker and Jacob Hansen have ensured that naughty words serve the noble purpose of promoting good grammar. We're encouraged to think of a colon, for example, as “a fence between neighbors in a trailer park in the South,” because it tells you what follows is “closely related to the preceding clause. . . . Real close.” The

dash—a favorite of WEEKLY STANDARD writers—“implies a separation more forceful than a comma, and more relaxed than a colon” and “is more useful than a f*cking Swiss Army Knife.” With apologies to Fr. Bernard Streicher, S.J., general editor of *Correct Writing 1*, had my high school used *Elements* as an English text instead of *Correct Writing 1*, the chapter on pronouns (“Pronouns are a real bitch”) probably would have encouraged me to know more about them.

Section II, “On Writing Like an Adult,” provides some prescient advice to this, or any, young writer: namely, that “the idea behind choosing a stylistic structure is not the same as that behind choosing a *style*.” I'm still wet behind the ears about this whole writing thing, but *Elements* helped me realize that I haven't yet picked a style. I expect that picking a style is like signing a letter of intent to play college football, so I might wait a bit.

But more important than style, *Elements* teaches the fundamentals, the structure of writing, as grammar nerds might call it. Baker and Hansen equate structure with a road trip, where your destination is the thesis. Everything in between is an “excursion” to things you'd like to see along the way, like the world's largest ball of twine or the *Exorcist* steps in Georgetown.

The authors also illuminate a basic directive that many writers only acknowledge in private: Listen to your editors. “An actual road trip, whose wasted hours can't be retrieved,” differs from writing, say Baker and Hansen, since writing can “be salvaged after the fact by a proof-reader's keen eye.” Sage advice—especially for me, since I sit a few feet away from my editors.

To some, of course, *Elements* may seem juvenile. Its humor comes straight from the gutter. Or the mind of a pubescent teenager, which might explain why I like it. So, if you're in the market for a bestselling book on writing that has sold more copies than *Harry Potter*, buy Strunk and White. But if your humor is a bit off-color, and you seek entertainment and enlightenment, try this one. ♦

Grub Street

The war on terror in all its strife and ambiguity.

BY JOHN PODHORETZ

Director Kathryn Bigelow, who won an Oscar for *The Hurt Locker* after a career of making worse-to-middling action pictures, is a visionary of the grubby. In that 2009 Iraq war movie, and in her new one about the hunt for Osama bin Laden, *Zero Dark Thirty*, sand and dirt and grime and mold and mildew and puddles become characters as vivid as, if not more vivid than, the humans. Bigelow anthropomorphizes grubbiness—investing it with menace, or despair, or sadness, or pathos, or rage, or whatever the scene calls for.

This is a real directorial achievement, and I say that without a trace of irony. As she enters her sixties, Bigelow has become a major filmmaker by finding both her true subject and its proper visual analogue. Bigelow and Mark Boal, who wrote the screenplays for both war movies, portray the collision of the United States with parts of the world that look and feel alien—and operate under different premises from the ones Americans share.

The Bigelow-Boal films offer a portrait of the United States at war with enemies who we struggle to understand, and in places we struggle to get a sense of. In one stunning sequence in *Zero Dark Thirty*, a U.S. surveillance team begins its search for a suspect in a crowded market in Pakistan. Bigelow pulls back the camera to show thousands of people teeming in the marketplace, while three Americans search for a single person whose face and name and car and profession they do not know. Their anxiety becomes our anxiety.

In this respect, those attacking *Zero*

Zero Dark Thirty
Directed by Kathryn Bigelow



Dark Thirty for its dispassionate portrait of harsh interrogation techniques used in the search for bin Laden are right to be offended by the movie. Bigelow's depiction of the "otherness" of Muslim countries functions, dramatically, as a ready excuse for American actions of which the film's attackers disapprove. They want to see the American characters who engage in harsh interrogations punished on screen for their sins, shown to be losing their souls, tormented by the evil they've done. Bigelow and Boal do not do this. Instead, the American operative they show waterboarding a mid-level al Qaeda detainee—which, by the way, did not happen in actuality, as only three very senior terrorists were waterboarded—does not suffer a pang of conscience, or a moment of lost sleep (though he does say later he's seen one too many naked men). What's more, he's by far the most attractive character in the movie. Played by an unknown Australian named Jason Clarke, he makes as indelible an impression as the then-unknown Jeremy Renner did as the lead in *The Hurt Locker*.

In a telling turn of phrase, Michael Hastings of *BuzzFeed* (the man whose *Rolling Stone* article gleefully destroyed the career of the great public servant Stanley McChrystal) writes: "The film makes a mockery of all those who protested America's regime of secret prisons and abuse." In other words, he chiefly despises *Zero Dark Thirty* because it fails to pay appropriate respect to *him*, and to Jane

Mayer of the *New Yorker*, and others whose denunciations seem largely based on wounded *amour-propre*.

This is not to say the movie is a flag-waving World War II tribute to the guys and gals who got bin Laden. Indeed, it's so thick with a mood of ambiguity, like *The Hurt Locker* before it, that it's impossible to derive any clear message from it. *Zero Dark Thirty* is largely a character study of a pensive young CIA analyst named Maya who spends nearly a decade tracking bin Laden. We see most of what happens through her eyes, but we have no idea what is going on inside her head, or who she is, or where she comes from, or what makes her tick. Maya is glum and determined and guarded and friendless, full of pent-up emotion and played by just about the most gorgeous actress now in cinema—Jessica Chastain—but that's really about it. Her opacity mirrors the opacity of the movie as a whole.

Maya's dogged pursuit of a single lead—a courier named Abu Ahmed al-Kuwaiti—turns out to be the key to finding bin Laden's house in Abbottabad. The movie offers a rare depiction of the blind alleyways, false approaches, and hapless incompetencies that bedevil all government investigations, and in so doing, provides a bracing corrective to the ludicrous spy-movie portraits of the all-seeing, all-knowing, all-powerful CIA. It's a government outfit like any other, with good bureaucrats and bad bureaucrats, dedicated employees and sluff-offs. The riveting depiction of the SEAL Team Six raid on the bin Laden compound shows just how easily everything could have gone horrifyingly wrong.

Mostly, though, the movie conveys a sense of the world that is surely as offensive to Michael Hastings and his brethren as its failure to turn into a denunciation of "torture." Bigelow's war-on-terror movies show the United States as enmeshed in an inhospitable and unfriendly part of the world, doing what it has to do, sometimes being stupid and self-destructive about it, and yet still ultimately engaged not in imperialistic evil but in self-defense. ♦

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L'Inaugurazione di Obama

An Opera in Two Acts

by Guglielmo (La Bomba) Ayerro

Libretto by Saul (l'Organnizzatore) Alinscchi

Directed by Carlo Marx

Act One, Scene 1

Barack II, capo della casa di Obama e il presidente

Michelle, consort muscolare

Malia, prima figlia

Sasha, seconda figlia

Plouffo, espirito di Politici

Valeria Giaretta, consigliere

As the barge bearing Barack II and members of his court leaves the precincts of the decaying Casabianca, it floats by the ornate Capella d'Obamacarre, where the choir serenades Barack with the rich "Canzona del Mandate Individuale," and then glides down the Canale Pennsylvania toward Castel Pelosi and the waiting festivities. As a troupe of gatecrashers dance the daring "Danza del Salahi," an argument erupts on board between the merry Plouffo, fairy-king of the Politico tribe, and Barack's consigliere, the sinister Valeria Giaretta. Giaretta demands the betrothal of the Principessa Malia to the feckless son of Harri, the Doge of Vegas. This is the price of la compromesso grande, she sings. But Plouffo has secretly promised Malia's hand to the hardworking, middle-class son of the longtime court jester, Giuseppe Bidenno. Giaretta taunts Plouffo with an intimidating solo, "Si No Capitulate Mi Braccia de Limbe Comme Emmanuele di Shicago," to which Plouffo, pointing to Castel Pelosi in the distance, responds with the poignant aria, "Tu Non Constructivo That." Suddenly Barack's favorite, the Contessa Hoppechiange,